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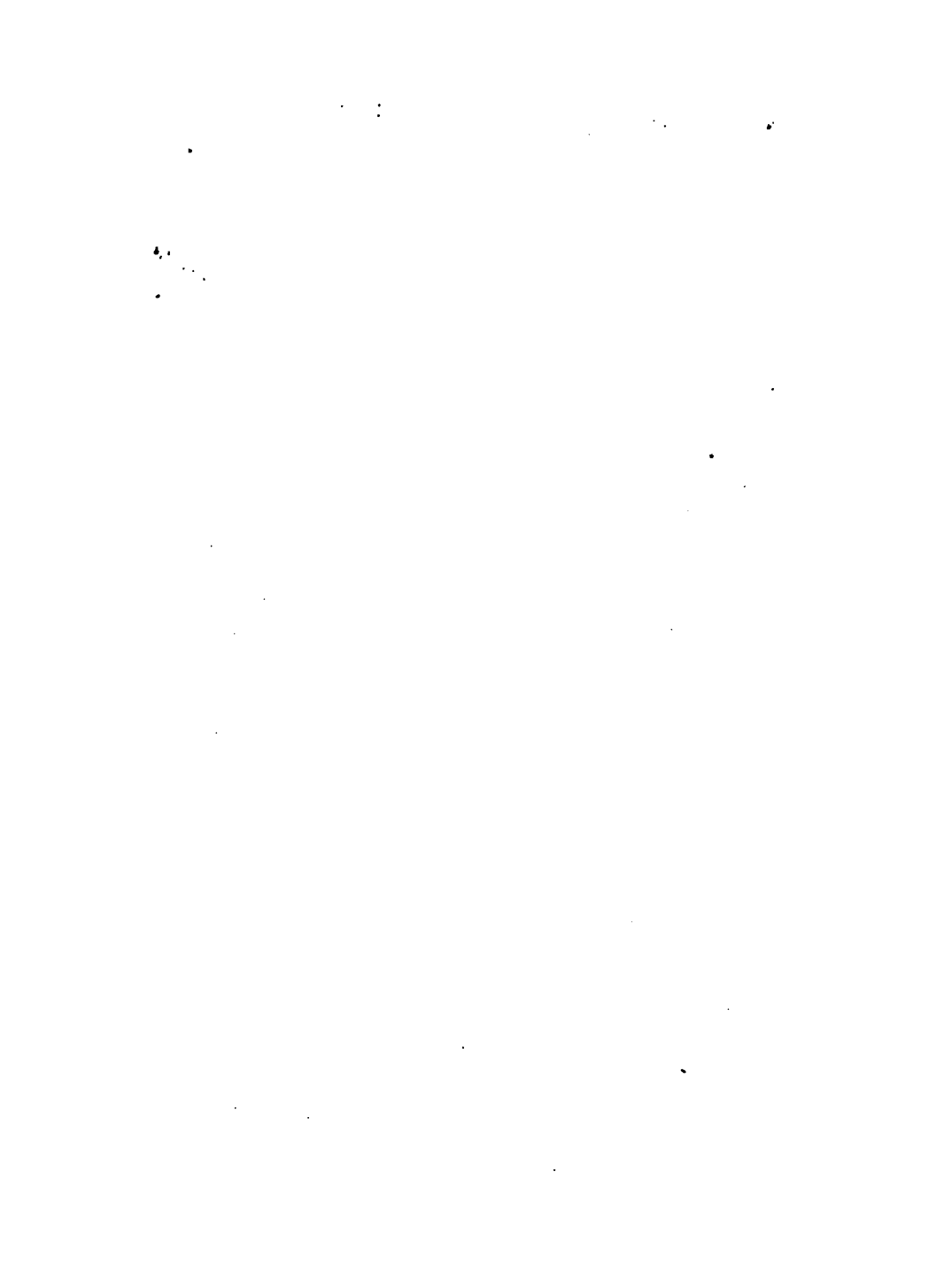
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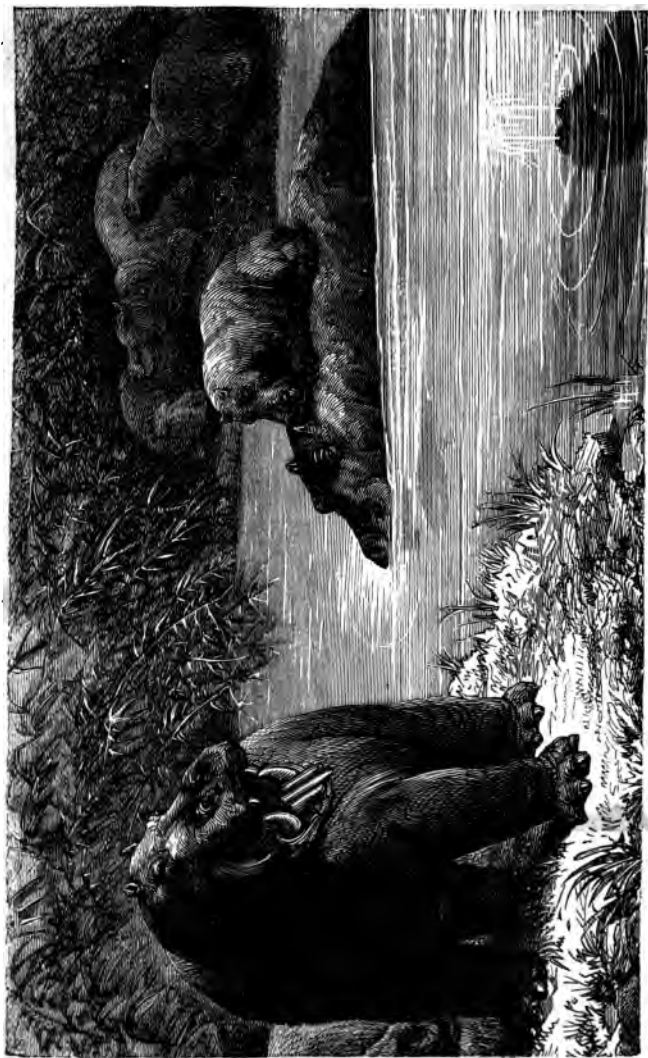
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"WHO GOES THERE?"—ON THE ZAMBESI.

See Page 52.

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UP THE ZAMBESI.



UP THE ZAMBESI.

CHAPTER I.

AT KONGONE.

THOSE who have seen the bar of a large African river, when the sea is even moderately rough, will not soon forget the sight.

There are times when such bars are terrible even to those accustomed all their lives to the sea, though, also, there are other occasions when by a fortunate conjunction of wind and tide there is nothing more than a long surging swell. This was not exactly the condition of affairs when we crossed the bar of the Kongone. The day dawned with a black, leaden sky, and heavy driving showers; there was a surly breeze and a short chopping, angry sea. With this weather, at seven o'clock two of the vessels made for the bar. Nothing could be seen at first but an unbroken white wall of angry rolling

surf. On closer approach, one black streak seemed to break the line of the formidable barrier. This was the navigable passage. Through it the ships were steered by bearings taken from certain trees, and a dilapidated flag-staff on an island close to the shore. The passage is always an occasion of a few minutes of intense anxiety, according to the state of the weather; but at length we were over, and in a few minutes found ourselves at anchor in several fathoms of deep water in the channel of the Zambesi inside.

It was a bright, clear day, when sea and land lay in the full splendour of an African sun.

Home-dwelling readers draw terrible pictures of the African river delta. The very sound of the words is suggestive of prevalent malaria; of tidal mud and lagoon-like reaches of sluggish river meandering through hot and dreary plains of gigantic grass; of mosquitoes in numberless millions and mangrove swamps filled with the sensible effluvia of a profuse vegetation, and sheltering every low form of amphibious life that delights in ooze and revels in slime, with deadly fever lurking everywhere.

The picture is partly true and partly false, but at first your mind is certainly not filled with the contemplation of such horrors. And during the eight days we remained at Kongone the flat and featureless delta of the Zambesi did not seem so unsalubrious a place. One does not think of the unhealthiness till the fever has poisoned the blood and given a sombre hue to all one's thoughts.

This danger is caused in part by those extensive mangrove swamps. I went one day alone to examine and satisfy myself as to what a mangrove swamp was.

Every one has heard of a mangrove swamp, but what it is exactly like, very few can tell. After passing through half a mile of dry sandy soil, covered with coarse grass, dwarf palms, acacias, and a species of strychnos, bearing a fruit in size, and colour, and hardness exactly like a cricket ball, I found myself on the edge of a wood of straight, slender, handsome-looking trees, with large shining leathery leaves. These were the mangroves, looking, except for their arched roots, nothing like the repulsive monsters of the vegetable world we usually take them to be. They are singular trees, nevertheless.

This forest rose out of a soil of black mud, on which grew not a single blade of grass, and which was covered with little pools containing the dirty water of the last tide. In every direction creeks and ditches intersect the swamp. There is great difficulty in making way over ground so treacherous. The roots of the trees are sometimes horizontal, but mostly arched. These form, if not the surest, at least the most firm stepping-places, slippery though they are. The heat, the humidity, the mass of green foliage above, the gloom and the sliminess below, and the silence everywhere, convey the irresistible impression that you are in a place unfit for human life.

As I sat on a dangerous perch above the mud, not a

sound reached my ear but the sharp chick of a gaily-dressed kingfisher, perched on his short legs in the branches overhead. He was a little spot of living colour—of vivid ultramarine and saffron—and looked at me with those large black eyes, full of confidence and wonder, which give so peculiar an expression to this bird's face. At



KINGFISHER.

the hours of the greatest heat of the day most of the life of the mangrove swamp is taking its rest.

Earlier or later in the day there are signs of abundant life among the mangroves. Things that live in ooze, and plague the naturalist to say what is their rank or place in the world of living beings, find a safe and congenial



FLAMINGOS ON THE BANKS OF THE ZAMBESI.



home. Millions of crabs, of different sizes and colours, multitudes of blennies and gobies, and other mud-loving fish of the same family, with the same unfish-like conduct of straying out of the water, poke about on the soft banks. Crocodiles lurk in the deeper creeks, or lie like a mud-covered log by the more shallow waters, warming their slow blood in the sun. On the sides of open reaches of water there are great flocks of birds, chiefly flamingoes, which wade about and fish in the shallower pools for food.

The formation of land is the real work of these strange amphibii of the plant-world. They lead a singular life, growing and flourishing where other trees die, and dying where others live. Their work having been accomplished, they move further out towards the tide to renew their encroachments on the sea.

I returned from the swamp late in the afternoon, covered with mud and drenched with sweat, and with those peculiar head symptoms that sun and mangrove effluvia alone can produce.

We sailed into the main stream by a canal some six or seven miles long, but so narrow that the paddle-boxes of the steamer brushed *aside* the waving and luxuriant underwood of the virgin African forest; and the sound of the paddle-floats, as they struck the water in the quiet morning air, seemed a strange disturbance to the primeval stillness of these woods.

After leaving the belt of mangroves, which varies in depth with the reach of the tide, we sailed very slowly

day by day through a vast grassy plain. The flatness of its expanse was broken here and there by clumps of Palmyra and cocoa-nut palms ; of lignum-vitæ trees, mimosas, and sycamores, and the enormous, grotesque,



PALMYRA TREES.

gigantic, and long-lived baobab. Scattered over the plain there were also the brown roofs of small native villages, the abodes of the dwellers in the hot and damp delta.

In the delta of the Zambesi, the population must at one time have been much greater than it is now. How many thousands of those who were born on the banks of that river now sleep, after a miserable existence, in a slave's grave in Brazil and Cuba, and elsewhere, no one can say. All Central Africa has much the same history. The astonishing thing about the history of that continent, after so many centuries of depopulation by the export slave-trade, and all the wars and villanies to which it gives rise, is, that the whole country is not a vast desert, tenanted only by wild beasts. It was said that one time this horrible trade was carried on with such frightful success on the lower Zambesi, that the country was rapidly becoming a desert; and the wholesale deportation of the unhappy people was only stopped by the efforts of the Portuguese home government.

At sundown we cast anchor and proceeded to the shore.

The night was quiet and still, as only nights in the African wilderness can be, when about twelve o'clock the stillness was in a moment broken by a tremendous clanging of the large bell on board the *Nyassa*. We seized our guns, which, for life in that country, have always to be kept ready, and rushed down in breathless haste to the water's edge, and shouted in the darkness,—

“On board there! what's the matter?”

A voice, which we recognised as that of Macleod, the Scotch blacksmith, replied,—

“Sir, sir! come a'boord!”

We pushed off, and got on board, and found Macleod standing by the cabin door, in a state of great alarm. He explained that he had been roused out of his sleep by the sound of irons striking against the ship's side, and by men clambering on board. He was very weak, poor fellow, from illness at the time, and not very well able to defend himself. He also said,—

“There are two men forward there down on the deck. There may be more. Take care.”

We approached cautiously, even though we were well armed, and had now got a light. But we found nothing to fight with. Instead, we found, crouching down on the deck, two poor creatures, lads of about eighteen or twenty, chained together by a few links round the ankle, and an iron bar of about twenty inches connecting the two. They did not utter a single word, but simply looked up at us with imploring glances, as if their position would tell their sad story best, and as if to say, “Here we are, trying to escape from these chains and slavery. Help us, Englishmen!”

The dumb appealing misery of these two poor lads will haunt me as long as I live. They were two slaves being carried down to the coast. They had stopped for the night on an island opposite Shupanga, their owner probably thinking they would, with the others he had, be more safe there than on the mainland. But they managed to escape, had seized a small canoe, a mere skiff, and had paddled up by the side of the island till they got fairly into the stream, and then taking advantage

of the current, had made in the darkness a desperate shot at the ship, and having brought their canoe alongside,



A SLAVE "KEEPER."

allowed it to float away in the stream, and clambered up the iron sides of what seemed to them an ark of

safety. Their bold venture implied considerable skill, as well as nerve and daring. The slightest motion of either of their bodies made a clanking noise by the movement of their heavy chains. How they managed to get out of the huts, and escape from their keepers without noise, to get a canoe in a place strange to them, and most of all to make for the ship so successfully, and climb up its steep sides, for there was no ladder on that side by which they entered, and the ship, being light, was high out of the water, is to me, even at the distance of many years, a cause of frequent wonder.

The dangers as well as the difficulties were many. The night was dark, the island unknown, the current was swift, and the river deep. Crocodiles were abundant; two lives had been lost at that spot shortly before; and had either of them missed his footing on the ship's side, chained together as they were, it was certain death to both. But there they were; and, as I have said, they simply looked up at us, as they lay uncomfortably huddled together by their short chains, their naked bodies covered with mud and wet.

We got them ashore, took them to the house, and gave them supper and a mat to sleep on. The worst part of the story remains to be told.

Early next morning their merciless master came to claim them. He was probably put on the right scent by the uproar of that unfortunate bell. He was determined to have them; resistance was useless. It was a miserable moment when we saw those two poor sons of

wretchedness and ignorance hobble off to a life of misery. The future promises little to a slave. What vile punishment they may have endured for this attempt to escape, themselves and God in heaven only know. That they suffered is certain. At the back of that same house I have seen three grown men, for a slighter offence than trying to escape, tied, stripped naked, laid on their faces on the earth, and flogged by relays of powerful men, one standing on each side, till skin in large flakes and blood in abundance flew about under the tremendous blows of broad heavy thongs of hardened hide, and till the unhappy victims were unable to rise, and had to be lifted up and taken away.

As we passed up the river the people came down from their villages to look at the steamer as it passed. They are willing to trade in anything or everything, and as we were dependent on them in great part for supplies of fuel, the trade in wood was the most thriving.



UP THE ZAMBESI.

CHAPTER II.

AT SHUPANGA.

THE river here is more than a mile wide ; and in flood a great volume of water sweeps down between its flat banks. It is full of low grassy islands. In the dry season the channel contains numerous bars and sandpits, which make the upward voyage very tedious.

Shupanga is about a hundred miles up the river. Here the blue tops of Morumbala mountains appear in the distance, and afford a pleasing change of landscape. We cast anchor close to a beautiful grove of mangoes. These handsome trees look at a little distance like fine English elms or beeches, but with a denser foliage, and produce the most delicious of all tropical fruits.

To see the country, and to witness the operation of canoe-building on a large scale, I went a short journey of

three days back from the river. I had as my guide half an African, half a Chinaman, by courtesy called the Senhor, who was going into the interior to look after canoes for his employer at Quillimane.

The tall six-feet grass that covers the country was still bending under the very plentiful dew with which the African summer night wets the thirsty earth, when we started with a considerable following of natives. An



IN THE FOREST.

hour's travel brought us to a neat and small village among little fields of maize, millet, manioc, sweet potatoes, and ground-nuts. These, with bananas, and four or five different sorts of beans, form the staff of life in this part of Africa.

The day's journey led us through alternate belts of forest and open grassy country, very flat and rich in soil, judging from the height of the grass and the size of the timber. Through the forest the path is laby-

rinthine enough, but the shade is cool and refreshing, and there is a damp, leafy, earthy scent as of warm palm-houses in botanic gardens at home. Small antelopes were abundant below, and birds, baboons, and monkeys in the branches above. The flora is not so diversified as on hills, but there is a considerable variety



ANTELOPE.

of species, and also of grotesqueness as well as elegance of form in stem and leaf in these dense forests.

Suddenly we emerged from the cool shade and pleasant gloom of the woods on an open grassy belt, on the edge of which lay a small lake. In the hot, languid afternoon

air it lay in lagoon-like stillness. Its margin for many miles was covered with a deep fringe of blossoms of large white water-lilies.

Snow-white ardettas, beautiful airy-looking creatures, steel-grey cranes, and black-winged red-beaked plotuses rose in flocks at our approach, and floated away through the warm atmosphere with their easy, sailing, dreamy flight. Black and white hornbills, more wary and shy, more keen of sight and stronger of wing, sat on the tops of distant trees uttering their hard, horny note. Water-buck and antelopes of various species were grazing peacefully on the gentle grassy slopes, and standing in the shade of small clumps of young trees that grew on the soil of old ant-hills. Large hippopotami lifted their square box-looking heads out of the tepid waters, to examine the string of bipeds that wound round the margin of the lake. They looked towards the shore, blew through their huge nostrils little jets of spray, and with stolid, heavy snorts, that seemed to come from cavernous depths of lungs, sank half-satisfied, half-doubtful, into the depths below, only to reappear in a minute or two, shaking the water from their small ears, to stare and snort and dive again to the bottom.

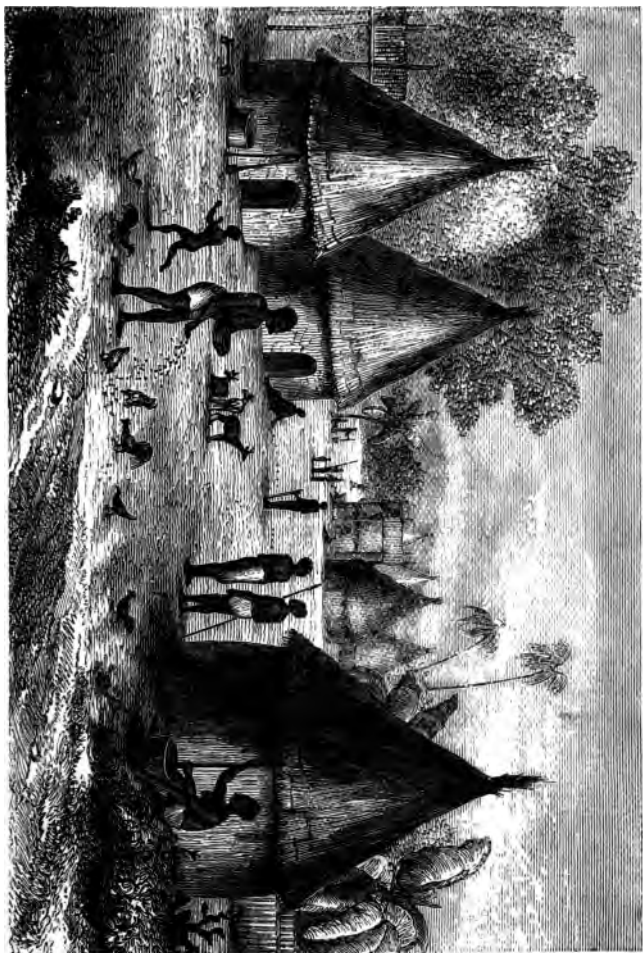
I stood still to look at this scene of tropical grandeur and beauty, that it might be for ever among the pictures of memory. I wondered what effect it had on my companions. Africans, as a rule, are not thrown into ecstasies by striking views and grand glimpses; and if poetic feelings arise in those dark breasts, few poetic words

burst from those full lips. But it would be unjust to say that Africans are insensible to the beauty of external nature.

We had still some distance to go, and we passed on rapidly, leaving deer and hippopotami undisturbed by a single shot. About sundown the maize and millet fields we again entered told us we were close to the village of Tambara. Some women who were drawing water at a well recognised my companion, ran home, mustered the available female force of the village, and came out again to escort us to the place where the men were standing. There was much clapping of hands and calling out of "Moio, moio!" "Sir, sir!" and a good deal of a vocal process by the women, which can only be described by the word lullilooing!

Sesa, the head-man, was not at home, but the next in order received us under a large tree. We were conducted to an open space in the centre of the village, mats were spread for us to sit down, and fires kindled immediately.

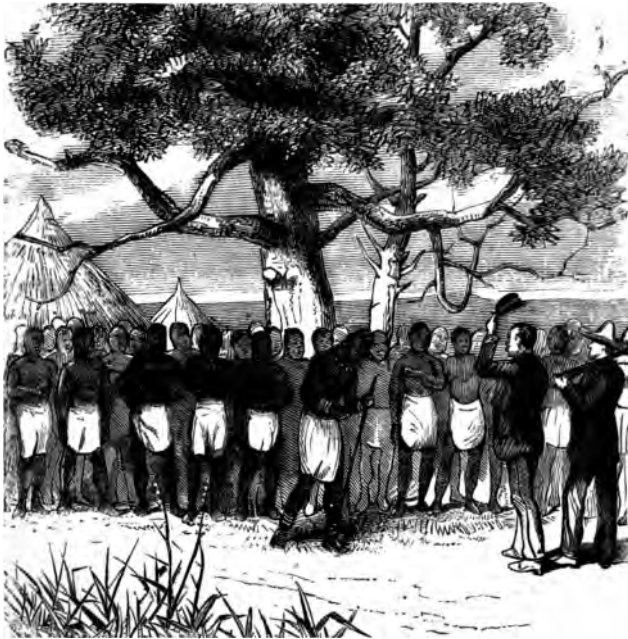
The antelope and monkey which had been shot on the journey were skinned and on the way for supper, and in an hour a savoury steam of monkey stew was issuing from one of the large black pots. It is one of the customs of the country that he who kills the animals shall first eat thereof, and so they brought me a large dish of this stew, and asked me to eat. But I had no longing after monkey meat, and bid them use it themselves.



NEGRO VILLAGE.



Nothing so half human as monkey flesh has ever defiled my lips; and after alligator I have never wiped my mouth and said "I have enough!" Elephant flesh, however, though strong, is very good; and fresh hippo-



NEGRO RECEPTION.

potamus steaks, to my taste, very much better. I have often been glad to get either. Neither could I detect in hippopotamus, either roast or boiled, that strong porky

flavour of which some complain. Elephant soup is likewise good, better the second day than the first, as it is improved by long boiling, and when well made is thick, gelatinous, and nutritious.

Instead of monkey, I got some antelope, and the Senhor and I supped together. He plied a bottle containing a strong and coarsely-distilled spirit, the product of the cashew-nut and other fruits. He invited me to drink, but I had no wish to invite a fever by drinking such fiery stuff, and therefore declined. I made some tea, and this also was not disagreeable to the Senhor's taste.

As the moon rose broad and full above the tall trees that encircled the village and cleared land, I took a walk through the place, to see its evening life, and then retired to the hut in which I was to sleep. I was still lying in the darkness thinking over a few verses I had read, when I was startled by a tremendous peal of large drums, and that measured clapping of the hands which calls the African villages to the katieka, or dance.

It was impossible now to sleep, and as the festivities promised to be on a large scale, I got up to see. The women and children sung and clapped their hands: the drums were beaten by the men. Both men and women danced, and performed movements not always very graceful or refined.

There was a suffocating amount of dust, and heat, and smoke, and sweat, and noise disturbing and polluting the

cool pure moonlight air of that beautiful night. It was the enjoyment of the villagers, however. Two things only could make such amusements bearable: bounding animal spirits, and ignorance of anything better. A good



FOREST CREEPERS.

deal of the rollicking savagism of Africa rests on these two causes. But as people get older, the animal spirits lose their spring. And some of the older women I noticed seemed to enjoy this fun no more than if they

had been at their heavy daily task of hoeing land or pounding corn in the banda, or native mortar.

I got tired, and after a time slipped away quietly out of the crowd to my hut. The noise of revelry by night still rang from end to end of the village, but I fell into a sound slumber on my reed bed.

We started early next morning, and about noon reached the place in the forest where the canoes were building. There we found a large number of fallen trees of immense size; the wood being of the same hardness as mahogany. The trees had been felled partly by small axes, and partly by fires kindled at the base of the stem. About twenty nearly naked men were at work on these trunks with small hatchets and adzes of native manufacture. With these light axes and by kindling small fires in the middle line of the tree, after many days, or rather many weeks of labour, the first rude form is given to the primitive vessel. It has then to be transported to the river, which may be twenty miles distant. Ropes of strong fibrous creepers, with which the African forest abounds, are then attached to the half-finished ship. Rude rollers are prepared; and the men, women, and children of the nearest village, and subsequently of all the villages on the route, are then summoned. They lay hold of the rough cables, and with an immense deal of pulling, and still more noise and shouting, the hollow trunk begins to move, and for the next fortnight or three weeks makes slow daily journeys to the bank of the river. There it receives the finishing touches, and with-

out either plane or chisel, a wonderful degree of smoothness is given to it, both inside and out. An iron ring is fitted into the bow: a large and clumsy helm astern; and the launch is then completed. The largest of these canoes will carry about forty men, or about three tons of goods; and on the lower Zambesi they are worth about £14 to £16 each.

I saw more of the country and of the life of the people before I left; but as the Senhor had to remain to look after the building of this primitive fleet, I returned to Shupanga, with five native companions, by a somewhat different route from that which I had come.

In these regions the lion used to be frequently met with, but in recent years, since explorers have broken in upon its retirement, "the king of the forest" has withdrawn to neighbourhoods of more congenial quiet, much to the safety of the cattle and comfort of the people here.

Of the great strength of the African lion there is well-authenticated evidence. More easily than a fox carries off a goose from an English farmyard, he carries off from the farms of Africa horses and oxen of full size. Hunters who have pursued this robber have been able to observe that he can do this for as much as five miles without more than once or twice putting down his enormous burden for rest, and in his journey leaping broad dykes.

He usually lies in wait for his prey in the night, near streams and pools of water, to which he expects antelopes, giraffes, and other beasts to come down to drink,

choosing some concealed spot amongst the long reeds which grow along its banks. The natives tell incredible stories of adventure with this cunning brute, usually with the view of showing themselves off as more cunning still.

One relates how a villager once went to a pool of water, intending to fill some vessel with water and return



LION IN AMBUSH.

to his home. It was in the cool of the evening, but still light. The pool was sheltered from the scorching sun by the shade of a clump of trees which grew around, and by long grass and reeds which spread out over the neighbourhood.

When he had reached the water, and was in the act

of stooping to fill his bottle, or whatever else it might be, he heard a sound which the unarmed and unprotected never hear without fear. It was the growl of a lion near him. Instantly he turned and looked up to that part of the bank from which the sound came. The lion



THE FIX.

was in the act of springing. Panic-struck, the poor fellow fell to the ground.

Nothing could have been more fortunate, for by this time the lion had made its mark and its spring, and was in the air. But by his falling at that very instant of

time, the lion shot right over him, and the next moment was doudnering in the pool.

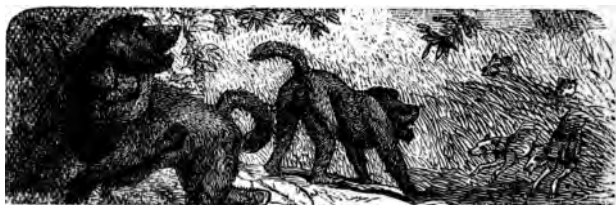
Seizing his chance, the man at once sprang to his feet, and ran, or almost leaped, to the nearest tree. Nimble of both hand and foot—for men are nimble of both where there is no ladder, and they must climb for what they want—he climbed the tree up to its first branch. Then he turned to look for his foe.

The lion, having speedily recovered itself, had followed the man, and when he turned to look, was just beneath him, falling from a point on the trunk of the tree to which, in pursuit, it had sprung. Another inch higher, and its paws had reached him, and dragged him to the ground. Though not yet the lion's prey, the poor fellow was at least the lion's prisoner. Exasperated by its plunge into the pool, still further exasperated by its fall from the trunk of the tree, it had formed a deadly resolve. There it sat at the foot of the tree, panting with rage, lashing the ground with its tail, and with open mouth disclosing its terrible fangs to the poor fellow above. A gun would have released the prisoner, but he had no gun, and no friendly help was near. It now became a question as to who could sit longest—the man on the branch, or the lion on the ground.

The night came on, and with the night the increased activity of the lion. He growled and switched his tail, and seemed resolved on another spring. Now and again he rose and walked about, but never lost sight of his victim.

The night passed, and the morning came. Attracted by some animal which had thought it safe to visit the pool in the light, the lion rose and rushed away to the pool. In an instant down leaped the imprisoned man, and with feet fleet as feet do become in lands where danger frequently occurs, he flew rather than ran towards his home. Soon he was out of the long reeds and in the open plain. Then he knew the lion would not follow him. And so ended this perilous adventure, and the escaped man safely reached his hut.

On the return march I first witnessed the use of the fire-stick, by which the African in his native wilds supplies himself with fire by means of friction, without the aid of flint or steel, or any of the modern applications of phosphorus.



UP THE ZAMBESI.

CHAPTER III.

TO KEBRABASA RAPIDS.

FROM Shupanga, early in November, I started for Kebrabasa. For my journey I got a canoe of medium size, not one of the larger size, but a light craft, and easily managed by a crew of seven or eight men. Over this was placed a rude roof of grass, intended to keep off the sun and dew, and the rain in the rainy season.

Into this hollow tree, of a kind of wood exactly resembling mahogany, I placed some food, cooking utensils, guns, ammunition, a few books, and the indispensable journal. There were also some blankets, a quantity of cloth and beads, the two latter being the chief currency, or at least a negotiable form of it, in all the wide realm of African barbarism. The rate of exchange on this,



CANOE, START FOR THE RAPIDS.

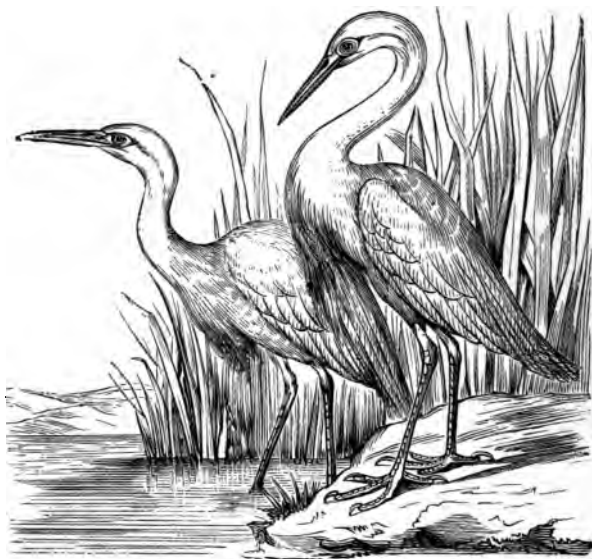
however, is not always the same, for the fashion in beads is most capricious. Fashion is even more sharp and short here than in England. The shape and colour which one year are at a premium may be absolutely unsaleable in the year after.

The only civilised provisions I carried were a plentiful supply of good tea, a small quantity of sea-biscuit, and some sugar. Wheaten bread is one of the greatest luxuries the traveller in Africa can enjoy. The substitute is the universal *nsima*, or stiff porridge, made from the flour of the millet, which forms the staff of life over great part of Africa.

The start is always a matter of difficulty, and on a long journey in Africa there are always two—the little start and the big start. It is only after some labour that you get your crew mustered on the bank. Their wives and friends come down to see them off; and as a measure of consolation to their sorrowing partners, you must leave behind you a good measure of cloth to each.

You get cautiously into your canoe, and sit down well forward. The paddlers sit in the stern. One man keeps the bow and manages the look-out with a long pole. He is the *kadamwe*, or captain. Everything being ready, he gives a shout, which is taken up by the rest and prolonged into a song; the paddles of your brave mariners strike the water, and your frail craft so nicely balanced and so easily capsized is fairly off on a voyage of a few weeks or months, and—for whatever the African wilderness may bring to you.

The first evening I spent alone on the river remains deeply impressed on my mind. In the afternoon it came on to blow, and we had to put into a quiet creek. The canoe was moored by some trees—remarkable for their beautiful purple flower and curious fruit—a long,



CRANES.

solid fibrous mass, weighing from six to ten or twelve pounds, which is afterwards developed from the flower.

Towards sunset the wind fell, and the life that peopled the creek only added to its loneliness. The gentle snowy

ardettas alighted among the reeds on the opposite bank. The guinea fowl came to roost in numbers on the trees overhead. The long-legged herons and cranes came home from their fishing all day in the pools and shallows of the river, and sunk down among the grass and trees at



HIPPOPOTAMUS.

the upper end of the creek. As the moon rose on the horizon up also came the hippopotamus to browse among the young reeds. A chorus of frogs croaked by the hour without seeming to weary. Fish of different sorts leapt

every minute out of the water to catch the mosquitoes and other twilight insects. By-and-by the men on their mats, or *fumbos*, snored loudly by the fire on the bank, and listening to these sounds I fell asleep in the bottom of my canoe.

In ascending the river it is necessary to keep close to the bank, using long punting poles where the water is shallow, and paddles where it is deep. In descending it is better to keep well out into the stream, and by taking advantage of the strong and rapid current as much as from fifty to sixty miles a day may be accomplished on the downward journey, while on the upward voyage the average will be only from twelve to fourteen miles. Sometimes the canoe is pushed along by bare banks with only the invariable six-foot grass above; at other times you are paddled along beneath the pleasant and friendly shade of a variety of overhanging trees; and again you pass by a tall wall of green reeds many miles long, and festooned by a light purple convolvulus of considerable beauty, which you are always glad to see and to greet, as it has a more home-like look than the wilderness-loving reed.

Paddling is heavy work, and in the afternoons the men cross their arms round their necks and say, "Danaeta," "I am tired." You set this down to African indolence, and urge them on, though they have been at work since sunrise. They obey, but in a short time the blade of the paddle again rests in the water, or is laid on the side of the canoe, and the wearied arms of the

paddler are clasped round his neck to give the wearied muscles rest. You are inexperienced, and not at all worn out by work, and you will show these lazy Africans how you can use a paddle! Half-an-hour's splashing makes you glad to resign your paddle, after having produced a good deal of grinning among your crew, and drenched yourself with perspiration; and generally thereafter you allow them to rest within reasonable limits when they ask to do so. I doubt if any white man could, without long experience, go through a day's paddling in that strong current with the same unmurmuring patience and steady perseverance as these poor Africans.

Towards sundown you must look out for a place in which to pass the night, and you choose some eligible part of the bank which is high and dry, with wood near for fires, or at least last year's dry reeds in default of trees. You cannot go to the villages, because this occupies time, and necessitates your leaving the canoe. It is not always possible to get a high and dry bank, and many a night I have camped on a sand-spit not more than six inches above the level of the river, or sometimes in swampy places on soft spongy soil, which yielded with a disagreeable spring to the tread of one's foot.

Having selected a spot, the canoe is moored alongside; all necessary gear for camping is thrown out on the bank, and the men set up some fires. Your native lad commences to prepare what may have been shot during the day. In lack of heavy game, birds are generally to be got.

Wild ducks at certain parts are found in enormous numbers. When alarmed, they run together, and present the appearance of one solid body with innumerable outstretched necks and heads above, and legs below. They are easily shot, and excellent when roasted on wooden spits before a good fire. There are also two kinds of geese, very difficult to shoot, but worth an effort, from their size and weight, and goodness of their flesh.

And about sunset there are many things that will attract your attention, in the appearance of the sky, and the altering hues of river and shore under the quickly-changing light of the short tropical evenings. One sight always attracted my notice—the long strings of water-fowl on their homeward evening flight, to their resting-places among the untrodden marshes and lagoons.

An hour has been consumed in this way, and then your lad will have spread your meal on a mat on the ground, and will come and invite you to eat. Despite of the rough cooking going on at the fire opposite, your food will be carefully and cleanly prepared; and if you are in health, you will not quarrel with it. I have seen the crew's porridge stirred with a paddle, and served in a straw hat.

After supper, the men will then have some talk by the fire, not always quiet talk, for sometimes it is very uproarious. If you sleep early, you will be awakened very soon.

Round the camp fires they have their own simple

stories to tell, their somewhat heavy jokes to crack ; and little serves to set them off in continuous roars of laughter. Some of them are very good mimics, and among them, as among a party of travellers with ourselves, there is always some less fortunate individual who is made the butt of all the jokes, and on whose head is placed the blame of all the mishaps and blunders of the day. If a paddle or punting-pole has fallen into the stream and been carried down, or a pot has been broken, or a sleeping-mat has fallen into the water, and will therefore be damp and comfortless for the night, it is this unfortunate individual who has done it all ; and he, poor fellow, gets the wet mat to sleep in, though every one knows perfectly well he was blameless in the matter.

Zingoparwe, a lanky, good-natured, but soft fellow was the scapegoat on one of these journeys. And but for his yielding good-nature, his days must have been rendered bitter and his nights miserable by the incessant joking of a squat little fellow with a big head, and a cross-cut, determined face, who was the wag of the party. His imitations of Zingoparwe's shrill, cracked voice and foolish ideas, constantly convulsed the rest with laughter, and have often for a time driven gloomy thoughts from my own mind.

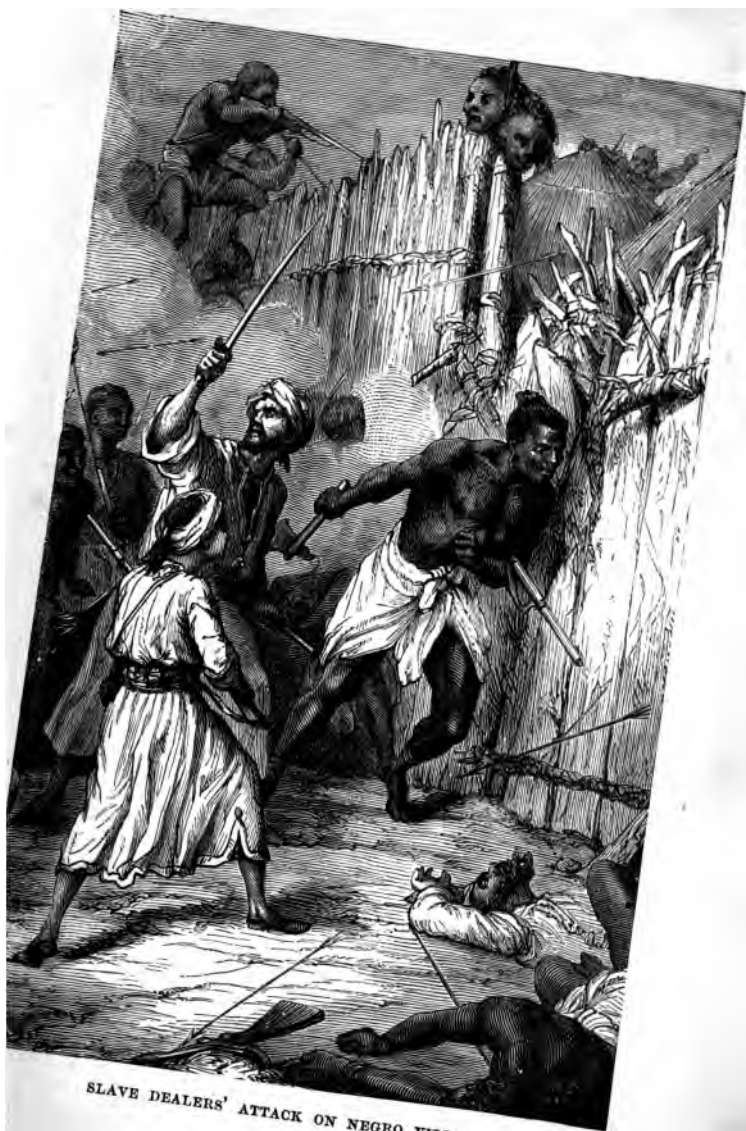
I have frequently thought how different would have been the lot of this squat man if his skin had been white instead of coffee-coloured, for he was not a dark African, and if he had had the good fortune to have been edu-

cated. He was not fond of work, and seemed to have a soul above the paddle, as if conscious he was fit for higher things. He was frequently ill with fever, he said, and lying in the bottom of the canoe; and though I suspected him, I never pressed him to work, as his irrepressible humour was the life of the rest. One day, when I had shot a pelican, he cut off the lower mandible which forms the pouch of that bird, and which is capable of enormous distension; and of this he formed something between a cap and a helmet, and wore it for a week. No harlequin was ever half so absurdly dressed as this native Momus in his ridiculous mask.

Weariness from the heavy toils of the day, however, and satiety from their meal, sooner or later overcome the group of black muscular figures who sit round the fires, and in a few hours the camp presents only the appearance of a number of objects, very like the cocoons of some gigantic insect, lying round the decaying embers. The sleepers are in their *fumbos*, or mats woven from the fronds of a small palm.

In this journey I passed a large number of villages. None of them are very large, but they are pretty frequent. Their names do not as yet live in story or in song; and as they would not interest my readers, I shall not mention them.

There are tens of thousands of such places on Africa's broad continent, whose unwritten history the past has wholly swallowed up. Yet in them live multitudes who are moved to laughter and to tears by the very same



SLAVE DEALERS' ATTACK ON NEGRO VILLAGE.



things that move us. We who dwell in abiding cities of solid stone, with our busy life, rich and full with the ripened thought of all the past, and the giant works of present art to minister to all our wants, can hardly realise the life that millions of our species pass in these villages that exist for a few years, and, once forsaken, leave no ruins behind.

We went a second excursion as far as Magomero, and in the blackened remains of several burnt villages, witnessed the horrid work of the slave-traders. Attacks are made upon the almost defenceless inhabitants with gun and sword and fire. Men who shrink from no atrocity are hired for the bloody work. The natives make a hopeless stand against the attack, which consummates its victory by slaughtering the aged and reducing the houses to ashes.

The one thing which more than anything else tends to keep the African continent in a state of social chaos, intellectual torpor, and spiritual death, is the accursed slave-trade. This is still carried on by Spanish, and probably also Portuguese ships; and by rascally Arabs in their sneaking little dhows. The import into the small island of Zanzibar by the activity of those Arab traders sometimes amounts to twenty thousand slaves annually.

For you, as the traveller, if you have no white companion, there are two things now to do.

Look to your gun and to your God—for in this kind of life you must have both constantly with you. Place

your gun under the edge of your mat or blanket to protect it from the dew ; and yet so place it that it will not go off during the night, to maim or murder its owner. And having done this, commend yourself with true gratitude and confidence to the care of Him whose presence fills all space, and whose unwearying goodness goes following you about everywhere, and then, with the stars above you as your only watchers, you may fall into sleep as sweet and secure in the open African wilderness as in the busiest haunts of civilised men. +

Cool and refreshing slumbers in hot countries one can enjoy only by sleeping under the open heaven. Next morning you will awake vigorous and refreshed, unless some of the malarious poison is already mingling with your blood. If so, you are restless and feverish, cross and ill-tempered to your men, and take the most desponding views of human affairs, even to the length of cursing Africa and Africans in one indiscriminate and mighty malediction. And thus you will remain, until by calomel, quinine, and a profuse perspiration, the poison has been expelled and the brain relieved.



UP THE ZAMBESI.

CHAPTER IV.

TO KEBRABASA RAPIDS.—(*Continued.*)

THE awaking is damp. The grass and bushes are all glittering with the plentiful dew, and your mosquito curtain is hanging in dripping folds. At certain seasons also a heavy mist hangs on the river—caused by the temperature of the air being much lower than that of the water.

Little dressing is required—simply because there is little undressing. A wash by the river side, in water cool and refreshing, you pull on your boots and coat, and your simple toilette for the day is complete. You can breakfast before starting, or go on immediately till ten or eleven o'clock, and then stop for a couple of hours, when you go on again till sunset, repeating yesterday again to-day. There is the same paddling and punting,

there are the same long walls of festooned reeds, the same overshadowing tree-fringed banks of mimosas, sycamores, and kigelias, the same grassy islands, occasional villages, and staring natives.

On the quieter part of the river, and still in increasing number, are the crocodiles—sometimes by ones or twos, sometimes by twenties or thirties—a horrid muster, all sunning themselves on the bank or sand-pits, and, to the unpractised eye, looking like so many trunks of trees left by the receding river. They seem asleep, but as you approach they will noiselessly glide in the safe depths below. A rifle-ball sent among them before they are aware of danger produces a frightful commotion, as they throw themselves down the bank into the water in pell-mell confusion, alarm, and anger.

The mischief done by the crocodile is very great; probably not a day passes that many lives are not lost on some of the rivers by the sneaking rapacity and amphibious tricks of these dangerous brutes. It is one of those few animals for the death of which no pity or regret is felt. There are several creatures of this class—the snake in all its forms is also one. Black African and white European alike feel a kind of grim satisfaction when the earth is rid of their presence by one less. On what this feeling rests it would not be easy to say. It is not the idea of mere danger, for there are other animals as dangerous as the crocodile. Perhaps form and structure have something to do with this intense dislike—and yet, poor brute, he is as he is made.

No one who has seen the eye of an angry crocodile within a few yards of him will easily forget its savage glare, or the cold sinister expression which constantly falls from that pupil of yellowish green. No one, I think, can look at that eye without a curious mixture of fear, dislike, and horror. Still I think I have seen its analogue in the human face, though fortunately only on rare occasions.

Eyes might form an amusing and instructive study. I generally paid a good deal of attention to their expression in the animals that were new to me.

In contrast to the malicious light expressed in that reptilian look, the puzzled, nonplussed stare of the hippopotamus is always amusing, if you suddenly come upon him without giving him time to collect his senses.

The eye of the fish-eagle seemed always to indicate an extraordinary mixture of indomitable courage and mildness. This bird was often shot as food for the men; and everything but fear seemed to be expressed in that clear round eye, even when it was being closed in death. It seemed, further, to possess an expression of generous reproach, as much as to say, "Well, you might have done better than this—deprive me of dear life when I have never harmed you." The weak, foolish expression of the flamingo, the pelican, and the histrionic duck, is also a well-marked characteristic of each of them.

In the shallow water on the sand-pits, or on the banks of little reedy islands, you will see the graceful heron

and crane in many varieties, not dangerous, but generally solitary and sad-looking. He has a lean and hungry look, and such birds are dangerous when wounded, because the tallest of them is about five feet high, and armed with a bill long and strong, and nearly triangular, like a bayonet, and if you are not wary he will strike to



CROCODILES.

the effusion of blood, and even to a serious wound. There are many smaller species ; some snow white, some blue and white and grey, and all marked by that buoyant flight that belongs to the heron race.

Overhead there are flocks of sailing pelicans—gregarious birds, with great capacity of pouch, great spread

of wing, a sailing flight, and of the size of a full-grown swan; not bad to eat at any time, and specially good when you have nothing else to eat. Sometimes you come upon a number of them resting on the bank at noon or sunset. At a distance, from their habit of rest-



PELICANS.

ing, or sitting down, on their short legs, they look like a flock of sheep rather than a flock of birds. There are far showier birds on the river, but, from their size and whiteness, the pelicans are always conspicuous objects.

There is also the *Para Africana*, that walks on the yielding surface of floating and growing leaves and grass, with as much ease as other birds do on solid land. It is a small, gentle bird, about the size of a pigeon, but raised on a pair of extraordinary stilts of legs, and furnished with four toes out of all proportion to the rest of its body, but which serve the purpose of walking on the floating vegetation very well. This remarkable bird is described in works on natural history as quarrelsome and noisy; but unjustly so. It is quiet and gentle, in comparison, at least, with its noisy, screaming, restless neighbour, the grey plover, so common on all the rivers. If there is a moment when you are hunting, and wish to be quiet and hidden from the notice of living things on land or water, that is the moment the troublesome plover, bent on mischief, will come wheeling overhead and set up its scream of alarm, and thus make all birds and beasts in the neighbourhood aware of your presence.

In hot, quiet noons, the smooth and glassy surface of the river is often broken by huge, black, rounded masses, that, at a distance, look like polished boulders of basalt—where, from the configuration of the country, basalt can hardly be. These are hippopotami basking or sleeping in the sun or shallow sand-pits, half in half out of the water, enjoying a truly amphibious life, a bath below and the warm sun above. If you approach quietly, and awaken them by a rifle-shot, the huge terror with which these sleeping masses start into life

and plunge into the deeper waters is half fearful, half ludicrous.

The hippopotamus is often described as ferocious and stupid. Stupid he may be, and is ; ferocious he is not, except when very brutally dealt with. Timidity, rather than ferocity, is his most marked feature, and he is best described as an innocent monster. His hairless body, ridiculously short legs, great belly approaching the ground, and much in the way of his running, his broad, flattened muzzle, his eyes projecting, and surmounted by mere tufts of ears, and his general puncheon-like outline, terminated by a ludicrous little twig of a tail, produce an appearance that excites laughter, but never fear, unless you happen to meet him in the middle of the river when he is excited, champing the water and throwing it about with his huge jaws in quantities sufficient to swamp a small canoe ; then, if he is very angry, he may take the whole side out of your frail craft, or divide it in two by a single bite, or turn it upside down by the slightest possible push.

It is interesting to see how gentle and kind the female hippopotamus is to her young. A certain much-loved princess may be seen in one of her photographs riding her little boy upon her back : just so may this mother be seen with her boy upon her back, and the little fellow appears to be very fond of the fun.

As the day grows, so does the heat, and the glowing rays descend with a fervour that makes the hard wood of the canoe disagreeably hot to touch ; gun-barrels and

articles of metal are hotter still. If the canoe be wide enough to admit of a little rude erection of grass and reeds, in the shape of an awning, some protection will thus be afforded; but if this is not practicable, as in



HIPPOPOTAMUS AND YOUNG.

the smallest canoes, there is the alternative to sit still and be as cool as circumstances will admit—seeing that so soon as the thermometer has reached 130° or 140° in the sun, both the sun in the heavens and the mercury in the tube will begin to descend. The greatest heat, however,

is not at noon, but between two and three o'clock, after which the slanting beams lose their force and the cool of evening is coming on.

At length we are at the Koberabasa Rapids. Navigation is here at an end. Such is the meaning of the native name; and it is a true description of the effects of these extraordinary rapids.

After leaving the canoe at the lower end of the rapids, I went a day on foot. It would require a more lengthy description than the limits of this chapter allow, to give the reader any adequate conception of that vast wilderness of stone, and those Titanic masses of rock which form the great groove, seventy miles long, that has been cut through these mountains by the river Zambesi in forcing its way down to the sea. Rocks in river beds at home give one no idea of these tremendous fragments. Boulders as big as cottages cumber the channel, which is exposed in the dry season.

No one, I believe, has yet traced these rapids from end to end. The appearance of the lower part in the dry season is this.

The natural channel of the river is about a quarter or a third of a mile wide. In the middle is a deep canal with perpendicular rocky sides, which winds about sometimes at a very sharp angle, with many rocky recesses and projecting points, and full of wild swirling eddies, in addition to the naturally turbulent current. In this canal, varying from thirty to seventy yards in breadth, for perhaps one-third of the year, flows all the water of

the Zambesi, which is spread out into a channel of a mile broad below.

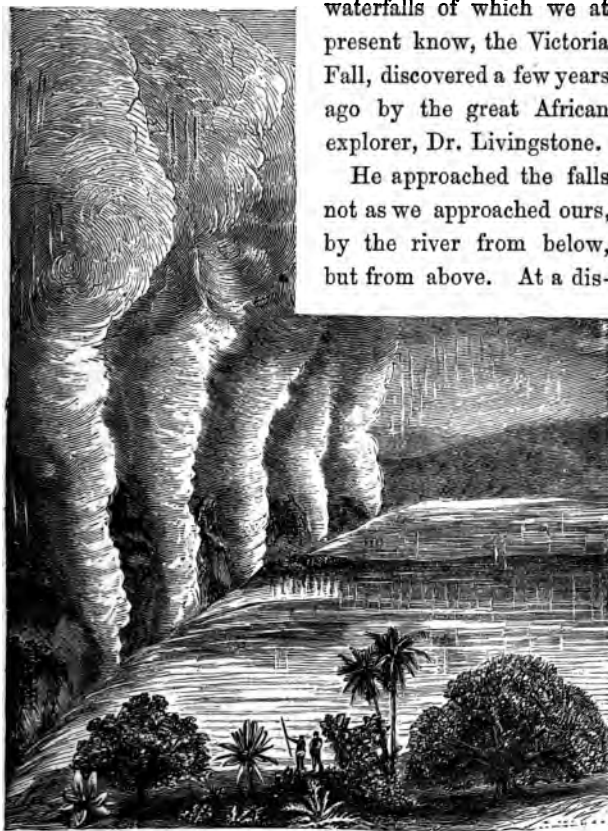
In flood the whole channel is filled up, and then those hillocks of piled-up rock, deep hollows of sand, the canal, and the gigantic boulders have all disappeared under the surface of a broad sheet of water that sweeps down between shores of rounded tree-covered hills, seven hundred to a thousand feet high. The difference produced by this change between the flood and dry season, is so great, that it is said to be difficult to recognise the surrounding country. Within a few days, while I was there, the river rose ten feet.

Beyond nearly losing my canoe among the rocks, by breaking the "chiwindo" or tow-rope of palm fronds—beyond being awakened on a Sunday night by a shower of rain falling on my face, to discover that my blanket was shared by a very unwelcome bed-fellow, a large yellow-and-black mottled snake—and beyond falling into the river, and being carried down by the current some distance—nothing very worthy of note occurred on the upper part of this journey. The last accident was the most serious.

So far had I got separated from the canoe, that for a few minutes I thought my journey through Africa and through life were alike at an end; and a pang of keen regret shot through my heart that it should have so terminated. But the time was not yet come. By hard swimming I saved my life, and was pulled on board rather exhausted.

Further up the Zambesi is one of the most remarkable waterfalls of which we at present know, the Victoria Fall, discovered a few years ago by the great African explorer, Dr. Livingstone.

He approached the falls not as we approached ours, by the river from below, but from above. At a dis-



VICTORIA FALLS.

tance of five miles he saw vast columns of what appeared

to be the smoke of burning grass or forest. The smoke ascended in five separate columns to a great height. Whilst rising it was white. When it had reached its highest point, it changed to black.

At the same time at which these columns of smoke became visible, there was heard a dull, roaring sound as the sound of fire driven by strong wind. The natives had often asked Livingstone if in his country there was "smoke that sounded." They had assured him that in their country such smoke did exist. He now saw the smoke with awe, and heard the sound, and rowed on full of eager desire to know more.

It was not long before he found that the stupendous columns were not columns of smoke, but of vapour, which rose from some as yet unexplained cause. Having reached the height of two hundred or three hundred feet he saw that they fell back again in showers of rain. Whilst rising they now appeared like the steam which escapes from hot springs or from the safety valve of an engine, and when they reached their highest point their appearance changed into that of a rainy-day cloud.

On a still nearer approach, Livingstone saw the river before him bend over the edge of some precipice down which it evidently fell. The origin of those remarkable vapour columns was now explained. They were produced by a gigantic fall in the river.

But a most remarkable thing now came in sight. The falls seemed to be the end of the river. Beyond the point at which its waters were seen to bend over the

edge of the precipice, there appeared to be nothing but land. Only a few dozen feet away there was land; land, too, on a level with the falling river.

Unlike the wonderful falls of the Niagara, which leap down into the lower plain and then flow on straight away from the foot of the fall between natural river banks, this fall to all appearance was leaping into a great crack in the earth which had extended the river's full width, and having leaped into it the river seemed to end, or to find its further way in a subterranean course.

As Livingstone approached the fall, he directed his course at great risk to a small island in the centre. Safely landed, he crossed it to the edge hanging over the mysterious chasm into which the river fell, and looked eagerly and curiously down as far as the rising vapour would permit.

Here the river is one thousand feet in width, the immense crack into which it falls is somewhat longer, being also about eighty feet across. The falls and the face of this opposite rock are almost perpendicular and sink down to the depth of three hundred feet.

The scene of wild boiling confusion presented by the waters at the bottom of the fall baffles imagination. The confined space, and the vast volume of water which is hurled down into it from such a height, accounts for the lofty columns of vapour and the loud thunder-like roar.

Further investigation showed that the river neither

terminated here, nor took a subterranean course. On one side of the immense crack there is an opening through which the waters find their way into their future channel.

Carried by the breeze on all sides of the falls, the ever-ascending and falling vapours keep the tropical vegetation in their neighbourhood in the freshness of a perpetual spring. The sublimity of the cataract and the glories of the surrounding scenery render it not unworthy of the name which has been given it by its brave and loyal discoverer.



UP THE ZAMBESI.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE SHIRE BRANCH.

A FEW days after leaving Shupanga, I entered the river Shire. It presents a great contrast to the Zambesi, which is broad, shallow in the dry season, and the mother of many islands, as a native would say.

The Shire is narrow—about a hundred to a hundred and fifty yards wide—well defined in its channel, with few islands, and deep for the first hundred miles. Ten miles above its junction with the Zambesi, there rises a series of pleasing low rounded hills, five to six hundred feet high, covered to the top with grass and small timber.

Thirty miles further up, the river sweeps round the base of Morumbala mountain, which rises to the height of between three and four thousand feet, and forms the conspicuous commencement to that chain of hills which

runs parallel to the river for a distance of about two hundred miles. A less regular chain runs along the western side of the river. The valley itself, through which the Shire winds with many a link and bend, as may be seen by ascending some of the hills on the eastern shore, is thus a great alluvial plain of rich, black, fat earth, not heavily wooded near the banks, but bearing everywhere grass never less than six feet high, through which clumps of trees are sparingly scattered, giving to the country a park-like appearance; and here and there are long belts of Palmyra palms—the cocoa palm has by this time disappeared. It does not travel far from the coast.

In this region, the women are the chief agriculturists. The sole implement of cultivation is the native hoe. Horses are unknown in the valleys of the Zambesi and the Shire, and cattle only found at some distance inland, and where that minute but formidable opponent of civilisation, the tsetse fly, does not exist. Goats of rather handsome shape, and sheep of the fat-tailed sort, constitute the pastoral wealth of these districts.

A little above Morumbala the traveller enters the first of two great marshes that form marked features of the Shire valley. At no very distant date these have been small lakes through which the river held its course. The lower is called the Morumbala marsh, and the upper, a hundred miles further up (by the winding of the river), is called the Elephant marsh, from the great number of elephants that find a congenial home and safe retreat in its solitude. These marshes are not great pools, but

tracts of land, each about thirty miles long, intersected by innumerable reedy canals and lagoons. The northern



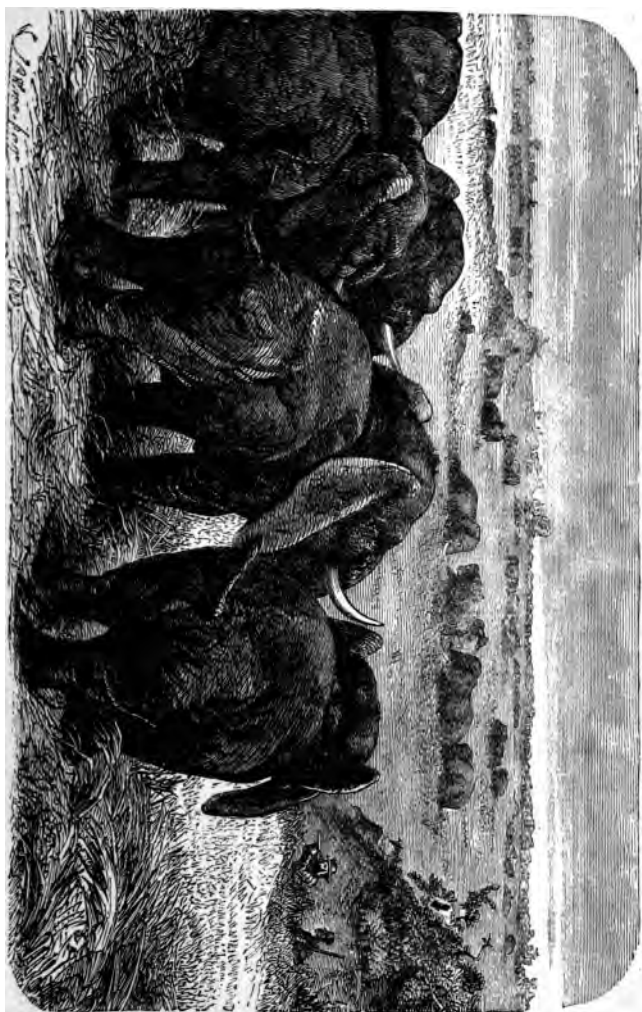
NEGRESSES AT WORK.

end of the Elephant marsh is marked by a semicircular belt of palmyras, about twelve or fourteen miles long.

In these marshes the land is so flat that if you wish to see half a mile off you must mount, acrobat fashion, on the shoulders of one of your men, and balancing yourself with a punting pole, you may then take a leisurely survey of the surrounding sea of waving green—grass and reeds alone being to be seen—and the tops of distant mountains far off.

In the forest, running along the foot of these mountains, is found that most interesting and intelligent of apes—the chimpanzee. According to the accounts given by the natives, these animals do not reach their full growth till between nine and ten years of age. Their height, when full grown, is said to be between four and five feet; indeed, I was credibly informed that a male chimpanzee, which had been shot in the neighbourhood, measured four feet five inches in length, and was so heavy as to form a very fair load for two men, who carried him on a pole between them. The natives say, that in their wild state their strength is enormous, and that they have seen them snap boughs off the trees with the greatest apparent ease, which the united strength of two men could scarcely bend. The natives also affirmed that they always travel in strong bodies, armed with sticks, which they use with much dexterity.

They are, at all times, exceedingly watchful, and the first one who discovers the approach of a stranger utters a protracted cry, much resembling that of a human being in the greatest distress. The cry first heard is to inform the troop of an enemy's approach, on hearing which



IN THE ELEPHANT MARSH.



they all immediately leave the trees or any exalted situation that might expose them to view, and seek the bush.



CHIMPANZEE.

The plantations of bananas, papaws, and plantains, which the natives usually intermix with their rice, constitute their favourite food.

The people generally are civil : ready to sell, if they have what you require, anything or everything, from a few eggs, a pot of beer, a few dried fish, a bundle of elephant or hippopotamus flesh, to a cotton loom or a small canoe. If they could only grow in quantity sufficient to form a large trade of such natural products as abound in the country, what profits, what colossal fortunes, might be theirs !

From the banks of the river I made several short journeys on foot among the hills. On the first of these, with my fellow-traveller, we came on what seemed to be a curious superstition of the country, or some very diabolical piece of midnight work in connection with the slavery business.

After our arrival at the village of a chief named Mankokwe, we were refused permission to enter, he being busy, it was said, with a deputation from a part of a country where lives the spirit of a certain deceased chief, and who communicates with his people by a sort of pythoness, who is called his wife. For this purpose an unfortunate woman is immured in a hut, and fed and cared for at the expense of the community, and when she dies another is put in her place. Each large village supplies a wife in turn, and now the evil day had come to Mankokwe's door.

My first impression was, that the whole thing was a farce ; but about midnight I was awake by a loud cry ringing through the woods, by hearing the people rushing out of their huts, and the women talking in tones of

great commiseration. The cry, "Mkasi angu! mkasi angu!" "My wife! my wife!" was the lament of some poor fellow who had been bereft of his wife in the night, that she might become the spouse of the cold shade of the mountains. Such, at least, is the popular belief, as it was told to me.

The religion of the people is man's natural religion everywhere—a confused belief in the existence of one Great and Good Spirit—the "Molungo;" and a mixed feeling of fear and deference to the multitudes of malignant spirits—"fitis"—who are supposed to inhabit the hills and valleys, forests and fountains of the land, and who are the chief causes of all the misfortunes that befall men.

The ascent of the hills is commenced by passing through the pleasant little valley of the Kubula, which gradually narrows into a mountain gorge. Thereafter for a day the path is a series of steep ascents and descents. Now it passes up the face of a hot and scorching hill at an angle that severely tries the knees and lungs of the climber; and at other times it descends into narrow shady ravines by the side of the most limpid and beautiful streams that any land can boast of, winding about among clumps of graceful feathery bamboos, sycamores of perpetually green foliage and deep shade, moist rocks covered with mosses and ferns, and other plants that shun the sun and love damp places.

The height is not more than four thousand feet, but a

long day's journey is necessary, for the descents are many, as well as the ascents. The sight from the edge of the plateau is very grand.

The plain is about eighty or ninety miles long, or perhaps more, and about fifty broad, and is shut in on the south by magnificent mountains called the Melanje, on the east by Lake Shirwa, and on the north by Mount Zomba. Out of this level table-land rise, like islands out of a calm sea, a great number of conical hills, some only a few hundred feet high, others, like Chiradzuro, rising to the height of four thousand feet. This gives the plateau anything but a tame appearance; nevertheless, conical detached hills are not those which painters love to copy.

The population is not dense, but it is considerable. The plain everywhere is well watered, and the villages are generally by the banks of streams. In the valleys the rampant grass or heavy timber chokes everything. The people in the hills smelt and work iron in a very primitive but ingenious way; bartering hoes and axes with the people of the valley, and receiving in return balls of tobacco and bags of raw cotton.

In an excursion from this place we caught our first glimpse of the ostrich. A flock of these gigantic birds is an exciting sight. They had come up here by stress of weather, heat and drought having compelled them to leave the plain and emigrate. Under such circumstances they always adopt this course, seeking cooler and better-watered heights.

They are curious birds. At the time of sitting, they divide into little groups of four or five. The hens lay their eggs altogether in the same nest, which is nothing more than a round cavity in the soil, of such a size as to be covered by one of the birds when sitting upon it. Round it a sort of wall is scraped up, which the eggs in the outer circle rest against. Every egg stands upon its point in the nest, that the greatest possible number may be bestowed within the space. When ten or twelve eggs are laid, they begin to sit, all the hens taking the duty, and in a most amiable manner relieving each other by turn. This is during the day. At night the cock takes his turn; he sits till sunrise and guards the eggs against the jackals and wild cats, who will run almost any risk to procure them. When these animals attack the nest, the bird strikes them with its foot and tramples upon them. Great numbers of these smaller beasts of prey have been found crushed to death about the nests. To crush any such animal, a stroke of its large foot trampling upon them is enough.

The hens continue to lay during the time they are sitting, and that not only till the nest is full, which happens when about thirty eggs are laid, but for some time after. The eggs laid after the nest is filled, are deposited round about it, and seem designed by nature to satisfy the cravings of the young birds. These, when first hatched, cannot digest the hard food eaten by the old ones, and the spare eggs serve as their first nourishment.

At times these birds leave their nest to the mere warmth of the sun. If at any time they find that the place of their nest is discovered, by either a man or beast, they immediately destroy the nest, break all the eggs to pieces, and seek out some other spot to make a new one. It is not always that intruders are discovered. A native will content himself with one or two of the spare eggs that are near, carefully smoothing over his footsteps. A nest may be converted into a storehouse of food for a household. Four very hungry persons would find enough for a meal in a single egg; and eight Africans, who are used to hard living, might make a meal of it.

The male alone furnishes the beautiful white feathers which are so much used as an ornament in the head-dress of our European ladies. We could purchase them for three or four shillings each, or get them at a lower price, in exchange for wares and clothing; but through want of skill in curing them, they are prepared in such a manner as to wholly unfit them for the European market. The female ostriches are of a very dark grey, and have no white feathers in the tail.

In the beginning of September, I went northwards to the Murchison Cataracts. These cataracts are seven in number, and stretch over a distance of thirty-five miles. They are formed by the river passing over the north-west termination of the range of hills that runs, almost without break, parallel to the Shire from a point forty miles above its junction with the Zambesi. But for these falls there would be uninterrupted water communi-



cation, for boats of light draught, from the sea to the northern end of Lake Nyassa, a distance of nearly five hundred miles.

We continued our journey northwards as far as Guluwe, sixty miles from Lake Nyassa, where the entire failure of food caused us to turn. There we found the people beginning to die of the famine that afterwards swept off its thousands.

We arrived at Guluwe on a Saturday night. Twelve of us supped off the fore-quarter of a very small and lean goat, our last provisions; and immediately thereafter, when the moon rose, we went to hunt. We soon found game, but no shot was successful. The results of the chase were to me only a fall out of a tree, whither I had run for safety after missing my buffalo, and a fever next day.

To support a party by hunting requires long experience, and the surrender of one's days and nights to such work; and though I shot a little, I cannot boast of my prowess as a hunter. On Monday, weak from want of food and the effects of fever, yet sorely against our will, we commenced our homeward march.

MADAGASCAR.



MADAGASCAR.

CHAPTER I.

THE COUNTRY.

THE island of Madagascar is situated in the Indian Ocean, about three hundred miles east of the continent of Africa.

It is the third largest island in the world, ranking after Australia and Borneo. It is nine hundred and fifty miles long, and about three hundred and fifty in its greatest breadth.

Our journey to the capital was uncommon in the extreme. The capital is in the centre of the island, and around it range rings or belts of land, each different from the rest, and sinking by regular grades from the lofty centre down to the level of the sea.

We begin with the lowest, and, from the capital, the furthest belt, that which lies around the sea-coast.

Here is Tamatave, the principal port of the island, inhabited by natives and foreigners.

To-day Tamatave resembles a poor, but very large village, its population, including the suburbs, from four to five thousand inhabitants, among whom there are eight hundred soldiers. There are a few houses of Europeans and some of Hovahs and wealthy Malagasses.

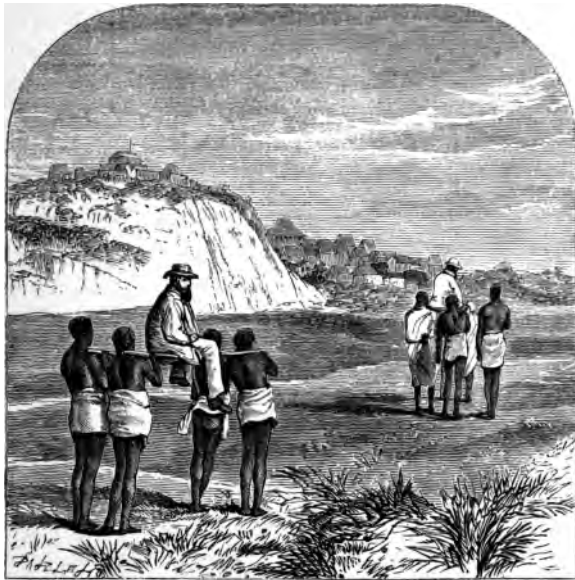
A Malagasy house in the low country is a framework of wood; the walls being usually made of the leaves of the pandanus woven into this framework. The door is made of the same material, and is not hung upon hinges, but is separate and movable, and at night is placed in the door-way and a piece of stick put against it to keep it in position.

The house is elevated on poles a few feet above the level of the ground, to allow the heavy rains to pass underneath, and this space below the floor is the favourite resort for dogs and pigs, that nightly dispute the privilege of taking up their lodgings there, giving rise to considerable disturbance to the traveller unaccustomed to this sort of lullaby, but taken as a matter of course by the natives themselves.

The houses are about twenty feet long by fifteen broad, and divided into two apartments by a slight partition, often only a few feet high. One of these apartments is lighted by the door, the other is lighted by a small window about four feet above the ground, without either curtains or glass, but furnished with a wooden shutter. Internally the walls of the houses are hung with

mats, and the floors are covered with the same; there are no chairs, tables, or bedsteads. The fire-place is in the centre of the outer room, and there is no chimney.

The costume of the inhabitants varies. The most common is almost as simple as Adam's fig-leaves, con-



PALANQUIN AND BEARERS.

sisting only of a small piece of stuff, which is thrown round the loins. Many poor people find this sufficient, and have no other clothes. The most uncommon is a piece of white cloth in which the wearers envelope themselves,

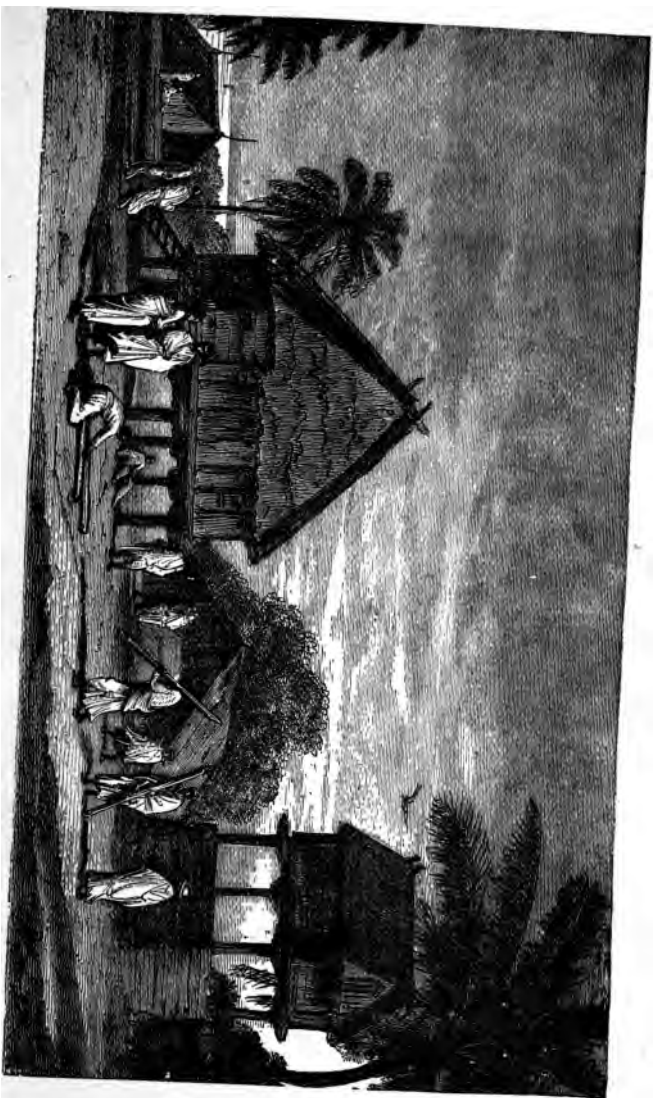
reminding one of the old Roman togas. In this they often look very graceful. Sometimes, to be freer in their movements, they roll it up and fasten it round the neck.

For our journey we were obliged to hire the only travelling vehicle of the country. It is a light seat fixed between two poles and carried upon the shoulders by four men. As the journey was long, eight men were required for it; to bear and rest in turns.

The scenery all along this belt is exceedingly beautiful. The sandy soil is covered with vegetation, and in many places the level tracks, gently sloping down towards lakes, are covered with short grass, and studded thickly, though not crowded, with stately trees, would remind us of an English park, were it not that the margins of the streams and lakes are lined with pandanus and other tropical trees. In some of these lakes there are numerous small wooded islands.

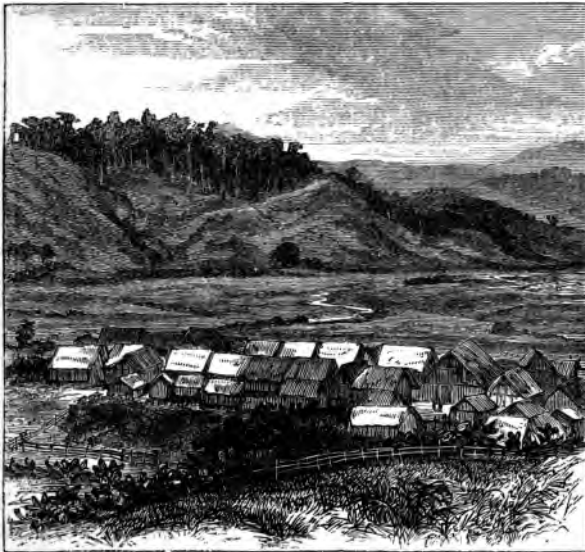
Further inland, we come upon the second belt, an undulating, knolly country. The rounded knolls are covered with grass, and the numerous valleys are clothed with palms, bamboos, and other tropical trees. This beautiful district is malarious, and, except during the cold season, is dangerous to Europeans. Along the greater part of the east coast this belt extends inland for about fifty miles, and all this way there is a gradual ascent, amounting in all to between two and three thousand feet.

We seldom find houses standing alone, studded about as in England; they are collected into villages, num-



BUILDINGS IN TAHITI.

bering from ten to a hundred. The larger ones have a flag-staff set up somewhere near the centre, and usually a house built by the village called "the queen's house," in which the sovereign's goods are stowed while they are being conveyed to the capital.



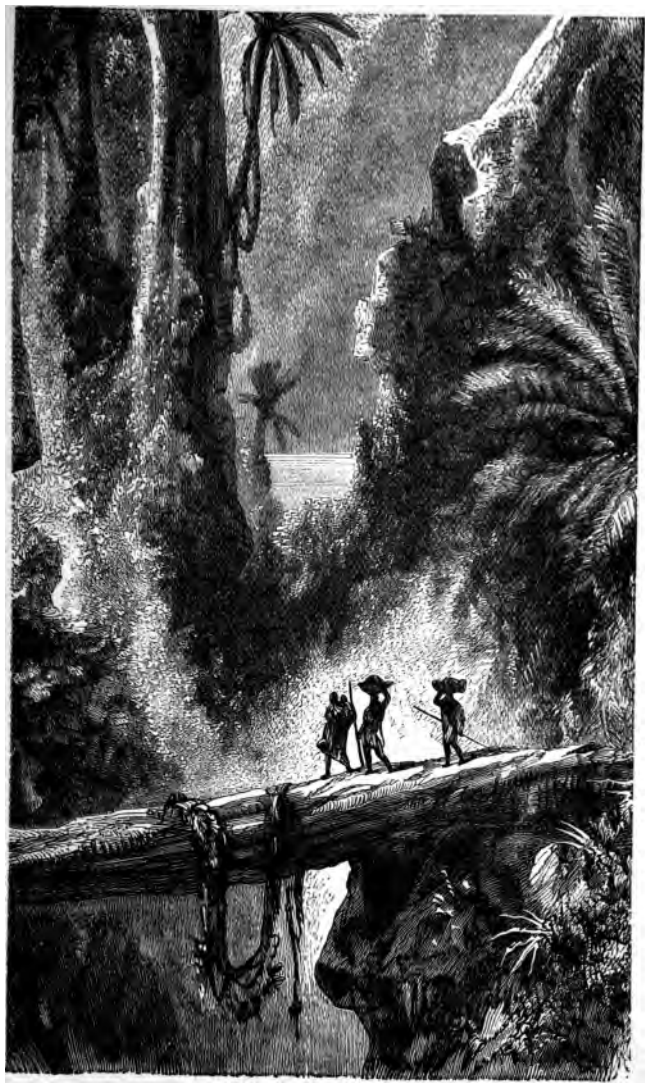
VILLAGE.

In the central province of Imerina, the villages are built on hills, and are surrounded by double or even triple lines of ditches or fosses. Many of the towns are enclosed by walls now ruinous, testifying to the disturbed state of the country in former times.

The huts are generally surrounded by cultivated patches containing a considerable variety of fruits, as the banana, mango, orange, peach, and pine-apple. Rice is the chief article of food, and is carefully cultivated in the high lands by the spade, the plough being unknown. In the low country rice grows very easily, maize and potatoes are also cultivated, and wheat has been recently introduced.

We next reach an elevated range of mountains covered with forest, and at an average elevation of three thousand five hundred feet above the level of the sea. A few difficult tracks or footpaths pass through it at various points; but there are no proper roads upon which any vehicle, or even beast of burden, could be used.

Everything has to be transported by human labour; the palanquin is the only mode of travelling, except, indeed, going on foot. In the rainy season, from the total absence of bridges, save where some fallen tree has fortunately happened to span the chasm, from the deep ruts caused by the rains and the slipperiness of the steep hills, these paths become scarcely passable even for the natives accustomed to them. The celebrated traveller Madame Pfeiffer pathetically accords to Madagascar the unenviable distinction of possessing the worst roads in the world. The difference between the roads in Madagascar and other countries has been thus not unaptly described: "Roads in other countries are for the purpose of helping the traveller on; in Madagascar they are designed to keep him back."



NATURAL BRIDGE IN FOREST.

This forest belt is from thirty to forty miles broad; palms and bamboos only thrive in its warmer and more sheltered valleys. The hill-tops are covered with various kinds of mahogany, ebony, quassia trees, and ornamented with many different kinds of orchids. In this belt are found the wild animals of the country, which by the way are very few, the buffalo, and wild boar, and a species of fox are the only ones worth notice: there are no lions, tigers, leopards, or elephants.

Madagascar has, however, a few animals quite peculiar to itself. The most remarkable of these is the tribe of lemurs—popularly Madagascar cats. They are somewhat like the squirrel, but larger, with a fine, thick, soft fur, and bushy tails; there is a considerable number of kinds of lemur. Some of these in size and appearance have some distant resemblance to the monkey: they live in the forest among the trees, and are often to be seen swinging themselves from branch to branch, and making as rapid progress from place to place in their arboreal highways as a man running on the ground below.

Another animal quite peculiar to the country is the aye-aye. This singular animal is somewhat like the lemur in its size and appearance. It is nocturnal in its habits, and arboreal in its *habitat*. Living upon wood-boring larvæ, which tunnel beneath the bark of trees, it is provided with strong chisel-shaped teeth to remove the bark, and, in order to reach its food in the end of its hole, it has got a singularly long middle finger furnished

with a scoop-like nail, which can readily extract the coveted morsel.

Pursuing the usual route to the capital, we pass across another belt, a grassy plain, destitute of trees,



AYE-AYE.

sixteen to twenty miles wide. Passing across this plain, we reach still another line of high lands. In many parts along the border of this line there are outstanding, solitary, conical or rounded hills rising out of the valley

like sentinels, and at the back of these a steep range of hills rising up abruptly, running along and bounding the plain like a wall.

When we gain the summit of this range we meet



ANTAN. NARIVO.

another, but narrower line of forest, only about ten to fifteen miles broad, at an elevation of nearly five thousand feet. At this height the air is cooler and the climate healthier, and the vegetation more European in its aspect. Passing through this final belt of wood, we

come upon the great central table-land of Madagascar, running along, with some differences of elevation, for many hundred miles. It is away up in this central tableau, surrounded by the great natural ramparts, that Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar, stands, and it is here that the governing race—the Hovahs—dwells.

The people we pass on our way appear to be of very various degrees of civilisation. Some of them are evidently only a few steps removed from barbarism. But those which inhabit the central and coast provinces are civilised, though with a civilisation of their own, differing very much from the nineteenth-century civilisation of England.

But with varying habits the type of the Malagasy tribes is through all the same. They are of middle height and well built; their features, regular and good; nose, prominent and generally somewhat aquiline; forehead, broad and well developed; mouth, pretty large, and the lips are somewhat thick. In colour, though there is a considerable variety of shade, they must all be classed amongst the yellow-skinned races. As we get further from the sea-coast, we leave the darker skins, and as we reach the higher and cooler districts of the interior, we meet the lighter. The difference in climate no doubt partially at least explains this, but it is highly probable that along the sea-coast the people are considerably mixed with Arabs and natives of the East Indies, who have long had considerable commercial connection with them, and also in some places with the natives of Africa

too. But there is a marked difference between the darkest of the Malagasy and the negro.

As regards hair, there are two kinds; the light-skinned tribes is long, straight, coarse, while the darker tribes is short, curly; both, however, are black, and the hair is genuine hair, and not the tufty wool of the negro.

The capital is, in its shape at least, a miniature of the island. It rises from an outer and lower range up to a higher and inner range. At a distance the effect is most pleasing. But on entering, the symmetrical idea which the distant view inspires suffers considerably.

The streets are very irregular. The houses, instead of being in a line, are situated without order at the foot or on the slopes of the hill, whose summit is crowned by the queen's palace.



MADAGASCAR.

CHAPTER II.

ITS CUSTOMS.

THE customs of Madagascar are exceedingly interesting. As to government it is patriarchal.

The unit, or simple element, is the family; and just as the father is the ruler of his children and dependants, so in a village the head man, along with the elders or old men, exercise the duties of magistrates. The king, again, is the great father of all subjects. The sovereign is, indeed, often addressed as the father and mother of the people; and he in turn, reversing the compliment, speaks of the people as his father and mother.

Thus, when the present queen of Madagascar was crowned, addressing the people, she said, "O ye under heaven here assembled, I have father and mother, having you; therefore may you live, and may God bless you."

Then, referring to the judges and officers, and explaining their relation to the people, she said, "I have made them fathers of the people, and leaders to teach them wisdom."

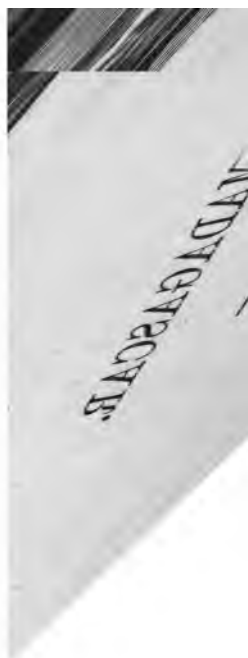
The Malagasy are firm believers in the doctrine of



WATER-CARRIERS.

divine right; even the very belongings of the sovereign are treated with respect.

It is no uncommon thing, while being carried about the streets, for your bearers suddenly to run off to some side path to be out of the way. On looking for the cause of



this, it will be found that a small procession is passing along, consisting of a forerunner with a spear, who duly shouts out to the passengers to "Clear the way!" Behind are two or four men, it may be, carrying water-pots filled with water for royal use, and followed again by an officer armed with a spear. The summons to get out of the way is obeyed by a rush to the side of the road, and the passers-by stand uncovered until the procession has passed. This is to prevent the water, or whatever else it may be, being bewitched.

The queen, and some of the higher members of the royal family, are entitled to the rump of every bullock that is killed in the island, and every one is actually conveyed to officers appointed to receive it.

When the queen goes abroad she is attended by above a thousand soldiers and a great number of camp attendants. She is carried in a palanquin, as the roads are too bad to allow carriages to be employed. When a carriage which had been presented to Radama I. was carried up to the capital, he seated himself in it; and instead of being drawn in it by his faithful subjects, they lifted it, wheels and all, and he had the satisfaction of enjoying a carriage drive after a fashion altogether novel. The palanquin is preceded by attendants dancing, shouting, and singing, with music.

At coronations and other great occasions, the leading people testify their allegiance in three ways.

One of these is doubtless of great antiquity. As a sign of submission, they present to the sovereign a piece of

money or silver called *hasina*, or holy money. This practice of making submission by presenting silver is referred to in Psalm lxviii. 30: "Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, till every one submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people that delight in war."

Another mode of testifying allegiance is by a ceremony which they call *milefon' omby*, i.e. "the spearing the bullock." A calf is killed, and its head, tail, and legs are cut off and are placed in the reverse position, in reference to the trunk, to that in which they were by nature. The person taking the oath then stands with a spear in his hand, while a judge administers the oath, which contains imprecations that he may become mangled like this bullock if he should prove unfaithful to his oath. The oath is ratified by the person being sworn plunging the spear into the carcass of the animal. This is regarded as the most solemn of all ways of professing allegiance.

The other mode is styled *mively rano*, or striking water. After having thrown various worthless substances into water—into a lake, or river, or water taken from these and placed in a canoe on land—an oath is repeated, and the water is then struck by a spear.

The Malagasy still believe in witchcraft, lucky and unlucky days, and divination.

Not long ago, in order to discover whether a suspected person had been guilty of witchcraft, a poisonous nut called the *tangena* was administered: if the patient recovered, he was looked upon as clear of the crime.

The belief in lucky and unlucky seasons was, and is still, very strong. Children born during an unlucky month were exposed on the road, and a herd of bullocks driven over the place. If (as frequently enough happened) the infant was killed, then this was proof that it had been a bewitched, dangerous thing, whose destruction was to be regarded as a blessing; if (as also occasionally was the case) the bullocks avoided it, and it survived the trial unhurt, it was looked upon as a sacred child whose good omens were beyond all question.

The Malagasy observe the New Year by a feast called the *fandroana*, or washing.

On the last day of the old year, the people visit their relations; children, dependants, and slaves, visit their parents or superiors. Each visitor brings a small piece of money, which he presents to the head of the house. Then the master of the house takes water, and sprinkles a little on their heads, saying as he does so, "Blessed be ye of the Lord; may we live to see a thousand New Years, and may our family never be broken up."

In a similar way the chiefs and officers visit the queen in the evening, to be present at the ceremony of bathing. Of one of these occasions an eye-witness says:—

"The ceremony took place in the hall of the great palace, a room of about eighty by seventy feet.

"When I entered I found that it was already filled. The queen sat on a couch at the north end of the room, surrounded by some of her family and her chief officers. A portable hearth, made by filling a wooden frame with

clay, had been placed not far from where she sat, and a good fire of wood was being kept up by some of her attendants. Upon the fire were several earthen pots, some filled with water for the bath, others with rice for supper. The water having been heated, the queen accompanied by some of her maids retired behind an improvised screen of scarlet cloth, held up by several of her attendants.

“After a short time the firing of twenty-one cannons announced to the city that the queen had come out of her bath. The bath was said to be of silver. She then appeared from behind the screen, dressed in her robes, and carrying a rude sort of calabash, went through the hall sprinkling the people, and saying, ‘May God bless you, and may we all see a thousand New Years.’ She then returned to her couch, and rice and honey were distributed. Pieces of banana leaves were supplied to us to serve as spoons. After supper the chiefs and officers arose in turn, and presented *hasina* (money in token of allegiance), assuring her of their loyalty and wishing her long life. The Englishmen present did the same. Hymns were sung, and the company then broke up.

“The same evening, just after sunset, the children tied bunches of dried grass to sticks, set them on fire, and ran about the streets singing and waving these torches in the air.”

NEW GUINEA.



NEW GUINEA.

CHAPTER I.

AT HOOD-POINT.

IT was a bright day in May when we started upon our five months' cruise. Our ship was a smart schooner of ninety tons, formerly a Peruvian slaver, seized by the French at Tahiti. The captain, who had long been engaged in collecting trepang off the coast of Australia and in Torres Straits, was well acquainted with all the islands and reefs in those parts, and so just the man for our expedition.

After touching for an hour at the north end of New Caledonia to take in wood and water, we made for a small group of islands about a hundred miles northwards, where the captain intended forming a trepang fishing station, to be worked during our stay in New Guinea.

We sailed for this place. Before it was sighted we

saw what appeared to be a dark thick cloud hovering over it. On approaching nearer we found the cloud to be alive ; it was a cloud of birds, a part of which actually came out to meet us and formed a beautiful feathery escort to the shore. We could distinguish the two long red feathers projecting from the tail of the "boatswain." On landing we found the island literally covered with birds ; it was difficult to walk without treading upon them, and having never seen men, they were quite tame. The guano was several feet deep in some places ; there must be many thousand tons of it on this almost unknown island.

Our natives "lived in clover" during the few days that we remained here, and clover of a very substantial kind. They got birds' eggs by dozens, and turtles' eggs by buckets-full ; besides birds, turtle, and fish, as many as they liked. We took about half-a-dozen immense turtles with us for the voyage, and found turtle-soup and turtle-steaks an improvement upon salt-beef and salt-pork.

On the ninth day after leaving the above island, the mountains of New Guinea were descried, which caused general excitement on board.

All were anxious to behold the new land, even those who had been suffering from sea-sickness since the commencement of the voyage, and who could not be prevailed upon to go on deck, suddenly appeared amongst the others with cheerful faces and in animated conversation. Soon the objects became more distinct, and the line of foam stretching away as far as the eye could reach, like a

ridge of snow, told us that we were near the barrier reef. We had a fine steady breeze, so coasted along near enough to see the natives in their large canoes on the placid lagoon beyond the reef, apparently beckoning us towards them. We dropped anchor at Hood-Point.

Hundreds of athletic natives come to gaze at us.

Their houses are erected close to the sea, the canoes being hauled up in front. These houses are long, tunnel-



HOUSE AT HOOD-POINT.

like structures, built on piles, with a ladder leading to the end verandah. From the centre of the verandah a small door opens into the somewhat gloomy interior. With the greatest courtesy they permitted us to enter. On either side are small partitions, each intended to accommodate a man and his wife. Between each sleeping berth is a slight partition, with a supply of firewood, the bark of the *melaleuca* (which here attains to a great size) serving

as tinder. From the abundance of this soft bark we concluded that it also served as a bed for infants. In the open space between each pair of compartments was a round mass of moist clay, as a sort of hearth on which to kindle a fire at sunset.

In one of these long tunnel-like dwellings about seventy married couples lived; the obvious motive being mutual defence in the event of a sudden attack.

We took a stroll round the village to see its "lions," and were amused at finding that at one end of the island was a house for lads, under the care of some elderly men armed with long sticks. At the opposite extremity of the village was a similar house for girls, under the charge of an elderly female custodian. What was taught there we were not educated enough to learn; but, doubtless, the very best subject was obedience, in which instruction the stick would probably play a considerable and an effective part.

Bread-fruit, taro, yams, bananas, and sago grew in luxuriant abundance everywhere; and a few days walk into the interior revealed kangaroos, monkeys, opossums, hogs (of a very peculiar appearance), and crocodiles in great numbers. Cassowaries, too, we heard, were very numerous.

On the rivers, especially as you get into the interior, crocodiles are the greatest nuisance. They literally swarm along the banks, and the traveller is obliged to keep a sharp look-out both before and behind, for they often spring from a lurking-place and quickly follow him. In



CROCODILES ON RIVER BANKS.

the course of an hour not less than three or four hundred may be seen on the bare parts of the bank ; what number remained unseen it is impossible to conjecture. Wild deer and, further up, buffalo abound in the adjoining jungle, and probably these form the principal food of the



KANGAROO.

crocodile. They are seized at night, when they come down to the river to drink.

The New Guinea monkey seems to be a remarkably intelligent fellow. He lives in troupes, and seems to enjoy some kind of municipal life, administering justice alike to

his own citizens, to his enemies, and to the stranger that ventures within his gate.

A traveller tells two excellent stories of what he himself witnessed and suffered in this matter.

"In other countries," says Captain Lawson, in his "Wanderings in New Guinea," "there is a common dodge of the crocodiles to entice the monkeys into their reach; and I expected now to see one or more of the noisy animals fall victims to the goggle-eyed monsters below, and with considerable curiosity I awaited the result. As soon as the black-looking heads popped up from the stream, the monkeys aloft became silent. Presently one big fellow—evidently a man of authority in this monkey republic—came down to reconnoitre. He returned, and in a few minutes came down again with a long thin stick in his hand, and accompanied by about a hundred of his companions. They began to chatter and pelt their foes; but the crocodiles took no notice, and, I thought, seemed to give a wink of satisfaction at seeing their silly victims coming within their reach. Nearer and nearer they came, until some of them were barely six feet above the crocodiles; and I was expecting every instant to see one of them dragged under water. All of a sudden, the monkey with the stick leaned over and drove it into the eye of the crocodile nearest him. The wounded reptile sunk like lead, and was quickly followed by its comrade. There was no mistaking the howl of delight that greeted this stratagem and its success. It was perfectly human in its tone, and was taken up with vengeful glee by all

the monkeys in the neighbourhood. The gravity of demeanour with which the old fellow committed this assault and battery was laughable in the extreme. He went to work with all the caution and seriousness of an old lawyer, and when he had inflicted the poke, he hauled himself aloft with an alacrity that showed he could form a very good estimation of the risk which he ran."

On one occasion the same traveller shot one of the seniors of a group, but before he could do so—ignorant of what was about to be done, probably, having never seen a gun before—the senior gravely spit in his face. When the troupe saw that their friend was dead, they howled at the top of their voices and seemed mad with rage. At once the whole company commenced to pelt the traveller with nuts, following him in his march, leaping from tree to tree with great agility. At last he broke into a run to escape from this storm of well-aimed monkey shots; but this move was unsuccessful, for the monkeys leaped along the tops of the trees as nimbly as the traveller ran along the ground. For fully three hours the avenging army kept up the pursuit of their foe. At length an open space in the forest, into which the traveller fled for refuge, put a stop to the monkeys' pursuit; but, as long as he kept in sight, they continued to shake their fists and make grimaces which spoke contempt, defiance, and revenge. The poor fellow's head and back and shoulders bore the signs of his battery for many days, his helmet being never restored to its original shape.

Monkeys here, too, appear in some cases to obtain unusual size. One who has seen much of the unvisited forest says that he has seen them of gigantic size and most human-like in form. Two which he shot were—the male, five feet three inches from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, and three feet six round the chest; the female, five feet in height, and three feet three inches round the chest. Both were horribly repulsive, yet painfully like mankind. The tops of their heads had short black hair. The forehead was not so low nor the nose so flat as those of apes usually are, and the lips stood out like those of a negro. Their faces were swarthy brown, and without any hair, their necks and hands and feet were also smooth skinned. They are not common, but are well known to the natives, who call them Tilang-noo, which means “the wild madman.”



NEW GUINEA.

CHAPTER II.

AT KATAU AND DARNLEY ISLAND.

WE visited the mainland at a village called Katau, situated on the banks of a double-mouthed river. The mouths are about four miles apart, and the one that we visited is about a mile wide. The river has neither name nor place on any chart.

When having dropped anchor you feel that the time has arrived for you to meet face to face a tribe of naked savages, and cannibals to boot, who are armed with poisoned arrows and many murderous weapons, and who entertain a strong suspicion of, if not antipathy to, all foreigners, you experience a feeling which is not exactly poetical.

There lay before us the people who had eaten the flesh and drunk the blood of more than fifty of our fellow-countrymen !

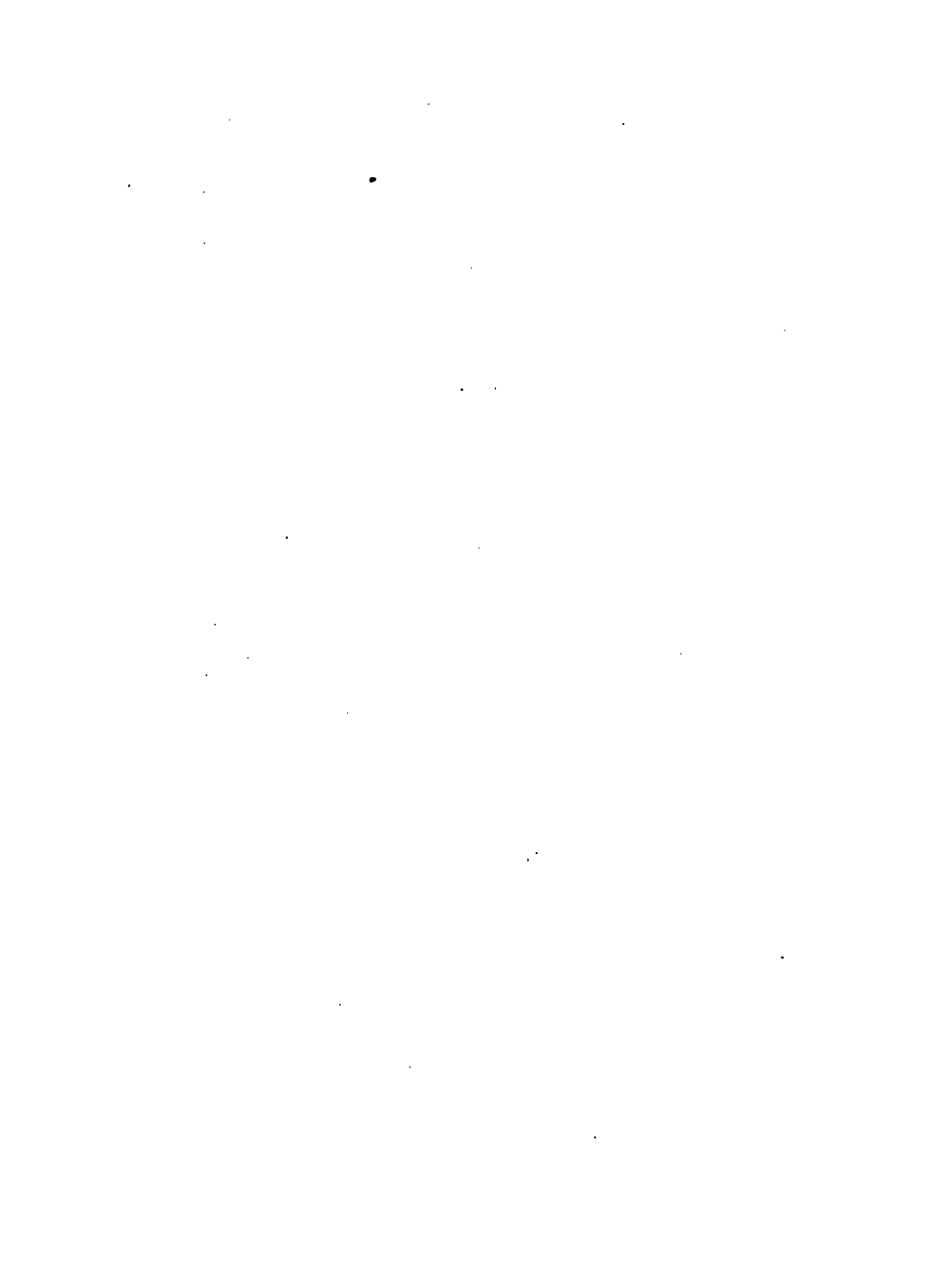
The first of these men we saw made his appearance on a hill close by. We made signs to him, lowered our boat, and pulled in to the beach. The man was a very repulsive fellow, in a state of perfect nudity, save a suit of grease and dirt that fitted him better than our tailors fit us. He had picked up a few—very few—words of broken English from the pearl-shell fishers, by the aid of which, and signs, we made him understand that we wished him to go with us to the ship. He hesitated, muttered something which we did not understand, then got into the boat, and on the way to the ship trembled like a leaf. After a time, and with some difficulty, we got him into a shirt, gave him as much as he could eat and drink—which was a prodigious quantity—made him a few presents, and, as we imagined, succeeded in making a friend of him, and as our herald, sent him on shore.

In the afternoon we ventured to follow, and called upon the chief. We found him in a house which looked very much like a haystack, enclosed by a high wooden fence. It had neither door, window, nor chimney, was reeking like a smouldering ruin, and the natives were passing in and out on all-fours through a small aperture. Not being at all ambitious to enter this king's palace, we desired an interview under the cocoanut-trees in the enclosure. The king made his appearance, looking—as I suppose all kings would do under similar circumstances—very much like his subjects.

One thing about the palace was simply ghastly. The



A CHIEF'S HOUSE.



chief had adorned the entrance with strings of skulls of his enemies. He was very jealous about these skulls, and unwilling that we should approach or touch them, calling them *malakai*, or "ghosts." The social and political distinction which goes with these horrid trophies of revenge renders their value great. Warriors unite in making raids upon the inland tribes, for the sole purpose



RIVER SCENERY.

of obtaining heads. The skulls are carefully prepared, and traded with to other tribes. They are part of the ordinary "export" and "import" of the country, indicating amongst themselves relative strength and rank.

All this part of the coast is low, flat, muddy, covered with jungle, and intersected in every direction with fresh-

water channels, varying from a mere muddy ditch to a width of five miles.

The houses are built on poles, the upper story being enclosed by pandanus leaves neatly sewn together. There are no partitions in them, although some of those we saw and visited were upwards of three hundred feet in length, and when viewed inside appeared like immense tunnels.

Our interview happily over, and various presents having been graciously received by his royal highness, we bid him and his greasy court good-bye, and rowed away up the glorious river till we came to another inhabited place—a village called Torotoram. It is about five miles from Katau.

Here we found the people of opinion that all the world are like themselves—*black*. Having never before seen whites, one of them actually wetted his fore-finger and vigorously rubbed my arm to make the white *paint* (as he thought it) come off. Some touched our hands and ran away, as if they had touched a serpent. To amuse them, I went ashore in a pair of gloves and, when surrounded by a crowd, quietly pulled them off. They were amazed, as if I had shed the skin of my hand. Greater still was their astonishment when they saw me and my friend take off our shoes and stockings, which they had previously regarded as part and parcel of our feet. They were delighted to discover that their visitors actually had toes like themselves. We were escorted to our boat on leaving by the entire male population; presents of food

were kindly given to us ; and then these harmless savages—harmless until by some cruel and avaricious European they have been deceived and wronged—gracefully bade us farewell.

Two pleasant days were next spent on Bampton Island. The customs of the people here are in all respects similar to those practised on the mainland. But it was strange to see a race of women with shaven heads. Sometimes it is their taste to plaster their bald heads with mud. Some of the Strait Islanders wear wigs. The Bampton Islanders are avowedly cannibals, and tried to convert us to their way of thinking.

The light-skinned men of the south-eastern peninsula invariably wear extraordinary nasal ornaments and their hair fastened up in mop style, adorned with cockatoo feathers.

The women of the south-eastern peninsula are adepts in the manufacture of red pottery ; in this respect they are far superior to their darker-skinned sisters to the west. They are utterly unlike the down-trodden, trembling, shrinking Negrillo women, inasmuch as they conversed freely with us at first sight, were courteous, and indeed seemed to bear the rule. They were exquisitely tattooed ; the men but slightly so. The scratching of finger-ends goes for hand-shaking in this part of New Guinea.

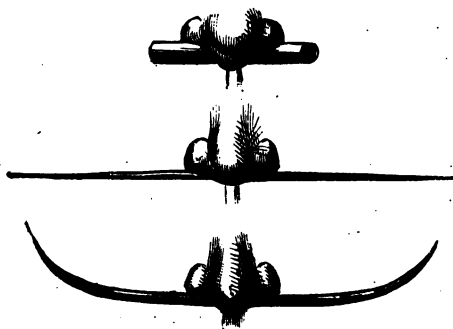
The pottery and women's girdles manufactured at Manumann are sold all along the coast for sago and betel-nuts.

The men undertake trading voyages of two or three months in strange-looking vessels. Seven canoes lashed



BAMPTON ISLAND POTTERY.

together and held by transverse spars form the basis on which the structure rests. At each end is a house, strong



NASAL ORNAMENTS.

and well thatched. These are united by a bamboo palisade about six feet in height, with a doorway close to the houses ; and outside is a rudely-constructed platform

about three feet wide, forming a pathway all round. The canoes form the hold in which the cargo is stored. Each contained a row of large hampers, made of the large leaves of some species of palm, and full of sago, betel-nuts, &c. The whole structure is about fifty feet in length, and twenty-five in breadth. Each such vessel is



MEN'S HEAD-DRESS AND TATTOOED ARM-BAND.

furnished with only two mat sails, and carries about fifty men and women.

We next visited Darnley Island, where we hoped to get an interpreter.

The tragedy enacted on Darnley Island presented itself to our imaginations in all its horrible details as we approached the place. It was here that the passengers and crew of the merchant-ship, including the captain with his wife and two children, were ruthlessly massacred by the savages.

Let us refresh our readers' memory.

The ship was on her voyage from Canton through Torres Straits, and was totally wrecked on one of the numerous detached reefs in those parts. The crew and passengers constructed a raft from the wreck by which they reached Darnley Island; but as they landed, they were met by the murderous clubs of the natives, and all massacred except four boys,—one of whom was the youngest son of the captain, a child about four years of age,—and five of the crew, who escaped to Timor.

When the sad news reached Sydney, the New South Wales Government sent the *Isabella* in search of any who might have escaped. Captain Lewes, the commander, found that two of the boys had been murdered, the other two were living with the natives in a state of nudity. The skulls of the party, forty-two in number, had been preserved by the natives, as a trophy of their deed of cruelty and blood; these the captain recovered, and found that many of them bore marks of savage violence, some being partially broken in, whilst others had deep incisions from heavy and sharp weapons. Among them were the skulls of two females and two children.

There was certainly nothing in the appearance of the island to indicate the character of the people. There it lay before us, "the garden of Torres Straits," with its hills beautifully wooded, containing large patches of green lovely park-land, and surmounted with groves of stately cocoanut-trees, the feathery tops of the tallest fluttering in the breeze like flags from a fort on a gala day. It was on

a Saturday evening that we anchored at Darnley Island, or Erub, as the natives call it. It is about seven or eight miles in circumference, and it looks pretty at a distance. The interior of the island, as well as along the coast, is clothed with vegetation, and the usual tropical fruits are



SCORPION.

found; and it is in other respects too much like the other islands already visited to need description.

One of the most dangerous and deadly of the reptiles of New Guinea is the scorpion. The number of deaths which take place through scorpion stings is enormous. Though the forests abound with snakes, centipedes, &c., whose bite is deadly, the scorpion destroys more lives

than them all, and the death which it causes is the most awful that it is possible to conceive. A recent traveller thus describes a case of this kind :—

“ We sighted a party of natives. On coming up to them we found that one of their number had been stung by a scorpion. It appeared the poor fellow had inadvertently sat upon it, and it had stung him. The wound was a little larger than the head of a pin. I immediately cut out the wound and applied ammonia to the incision and gave a strong dose of ammonia. Shortly after this he roused up, asked for drink, and being supplied, drank about a quart ; then he became unconscious, uttering fearful shrieks from either horror or agony, and starting occasionally into the most piteous cries. This continued an hour and a half, then a thin watery blood began to flow out from his eyes and ears and nose, and his whole body began to corrupt, throwing off a dreadful stench ; in a quarter of an hour more he had literally rotted to death, and his comrades buried him where he died. Such was a horrible death, by the scorpion sting.”

The average size of this deadly thing is about six inches long ; but, at times, it is found as long as twelve and thirteen inches.

There is here a spider, too, whose bite is exceedingly dangerous, often resulting in death. It is called by the natives the yagi. In shape it is like our common garden spider, but its abdomen alone is as large as a pigeon's egg. It is cream coloured, covered with ring-shaped marks of blue. Its legs are five or six inches long, surrounded

with bands of blue. Its eyes are exceedingly large and bright, and the nippers with which it cuts into its prey are as much as half an inch long. Measuring from the top



THE YAGI.

of the fore to the top of the hind legs, it is from twelve to fifteen inches long.

The nest of this creature is cylindrical, about the size and shape of a pound tin coffee-canister. It is built of

material like strong brown paper or mill-board, and is beautifully lined with warm, soft down. It stands out from the trunk of a tree horizontally, and is furnished with a door hung on hinges. It is kept from falling from the tree by tape-like bands. The door moves with great ease and fits perfectly into the opening at the mouth of the nest. It is furnished with cavities on the inside, into which when at home the spider inserts his five claws; thus bolting his dwelling and bidding defiance to all comers. He will permit his dwelling to be pulled down upon him or his legs to be torn from their sockets, but he will never yield.

The effect of a bite from the yagi is dreadful. An hour after, the patient becomes irritable, excitement increasing until the poison has been infused into his whole system, when he becomes a frenzied madman, and has to be bound with cords to prevent him destroying himself and others. Should he recover, which he generally does, he suffers from excessive prostration for a week or more. This vile thing, too, can squirt a liquid at you which raises blisters as painful as a bad scald.



NEW GUINEA.

CHAPTER III.

TAUAN AND SAIBAI.

WE next sailed out to Tauan, or Cornwallis Island, before proceeding to the main land, from which it is about four miles. Tauan is a small, rocky, mountainous island; or, more correctly, a small rocky mountain-island; for it is evidently the mere summit of a mountain, the top of which reaches about two thousand feet above the level of the sea, from which it slopes gradually down to the beach, and away down to its base on the deep sea bottom.

The island looks wild and rugged for so low a latitude—very unlike islands in similar latitudes in Eastern and Central Polynesia. Immense blocks of stone are strewn about in wild confusion, presenting all manner of fantastic shapes. Some look like grave-stones, others like mounds

erected over graves, whilst in some places they are thrown up like pillars forming door-ways and arches. Some of the blocks are of an enormous size, and must have been thrown into their present position by tremendous convulsions. In some cases one block rests upon the top of another, forming a sort of cope, and appearing as nicely poised as if done by human hands.

On one side of the island there is a small harbour, a



TAUAN.

sandy beach, and a little stream of good fresh water. On landing at this place we found that nearly all the natives had gone to the neighbouring island, Saibai. The chief, with a few of his people who remained with him, received us in a friendly manner, accepted our present, and placed one of his houses at our disposal.

Their houses are built on poles for security against alligators and snakes, which abound along the coast and rivers. The joists and rafters are of bamboo, and they are thatched with long grass. The flooring of the upper story or loft is of cocoanut slabs. We spent a night in this "upper story," but though alligators and snakes were certainly excluded, multitudes of lively rats prevented our sleeping.

In the morning we started at an early hour for Saibai; for though a night-game at hide-and-seek with a party of jovial rats is in itself by no means entertaining, we were willing to pay even this price for the pleasures it was possible to New Guinea to afford; but these pleasures were not to be found in Tauan. Saibai is an island about ten miles from the mainland.

Saibai is totally different in character from Tauan; marvellously so, considering that the islands are not more than four miles apart. It is a low swampy island, and fertile in the highest degree. No part of it seems to be more than about eighty feet above the level of the sea.

A large part of one side is covered with mangroves, and behind the village where we met the people, there is a very extensive fresh-water swamp, which looks as if it might generate any amount of malaria, although the natives look remarkably well.

The swamp appeared like irrigated plantations, and no doubt parts of it are under cultivation. The natives were moving about it in little skiffs, and beautiful wild ducks with snow-white plumage were seen enjoying

themselves, evidently in no fear of being molested. On the further side this great swamp is protected from the incursions of the sea by a natural rampart. As regards productiveness, Saibai is quite a garden. It is about forty miles in circumference.



NATIVE WELL.

We found the natives at Saibai a very superior race. They are genuine, very dark coloured Papuans. Their hair is slightly curled, but not woolly. They are tall and well proportioned, and the majority have good features. Many of them are as much as five feet ten

inches in height, some perhaps more, and muscular in proportion ; and they have not the cowed, down-trodden appearance of the Darnley Islanders ; on the contrary, there is an air of freedom and self-reliance about them



NATIVE COOKING.

which leads one to regard them as a manly and independent race.

They do not wear any clothing and but few ornaments, nor do they appear to use paint. The ornaments they wear are armlets, pieces of pearl-shell polished and

formed into a crescent shape, and worn on the breast suspended from the neck, and a kind of bead with which they adorn their ears.

The mode of decorating the ear is of a character not met with among the islanders to the eastward. The lobe of the ear is perforated when young, and gradually distended. That is common amongst all the natives of Western Polynesia ; but the singular part here is that



NATIVE CARVING.—LIMEHOLDER AND SPOON.

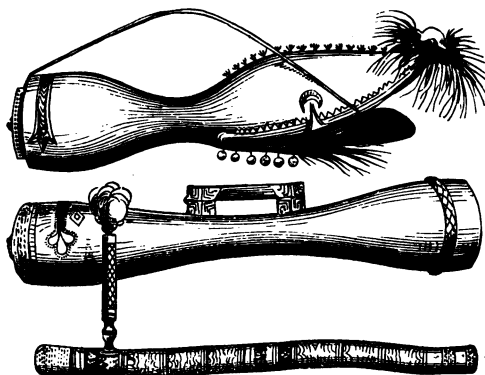
when the distension is complete, the lobe is cut, and a weight is attached till it becomes elongated about an inch and a half ; it is then pierced at intervals of about an eighth of an inch, and the series of holes is carried all round the rim of the ear, and in each hole a bit of red string is inserted, at each end of which a white bead is placed. This decoration must cost severe and protracted pain. It is not anything like universal.

The manner of the women is in striking contrast with

that of the men. They wear a girdle of leaves, look debased, and are treated as servants and slaves. This is natural, for polygamy is common; the chief at Tauan had twelve wives, and the chief of Saibai ten.

Very few of the natives of Saibai had seen a white man before. We were, therefore, objects of great and amusing curiosity.

Everything about us occasioned wonder, but especially



NATIVE DRUMS AND PIPE.

our white skin. It was not enough that our hands and faces could be seen, we had to bare our breasts and turn up our trousers to convince the inquisitive and bewildered natives that we had white bodies. Party after party came, led by some officious youth who had already had his curiosity gratified, to see the wonderful white-skins. They felt us, as a butcher does an animal to see if it is

ready for the knife. Our clothes, watches, umbrellas, &c., were examined and admired. They called the umbrella the white man's portable house.

They manifested most amazed interest in the production of light by so simple a thing as striking a match, and yet it was just the thing to *strike* them. They had never before seen any other method than that of rubbing two sticks together until the friction produces light.

Natives take most naturally to the pipe, and being an idle people, soon become inveterate smokers. They make pipes remarkable alike for their length and beauty. These are usually made of the bamboo carved and ornamented, and are often nearly a yard long. One of the natives seeing some of our crew smoking, asked for one of these wonderful matches, and, after summoning up courage to strike it, gazed with delight at the blaze, and then hastily put the other end into his mouth and tried to smoke it! Our intercourse with the inhabitants of Saibai was with savages in their primitive state, and it was both safe and amusing. What says this fact for the effect of white-man intercourse? Unprincipled traders will soon change all this. There is one thing worse than heathenism, and that one thing is godless civilisation.



NEW GUINEA.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE GREAT BIGHT.

THE natives on the east coast of the Great Bight resemble the Torres Straits islanders, but they are much superior to them in civilisation. They build better houses, and pay more attention to the cultivation of their gardens, in which they raise a greater quantity of fruit and vegetables, and altogether there is a degree of neatness and order in their surroundings which encourages belief in their capability of still greater progress. I was particularly struck with their fine athletic forms, and well-shaped heads.

Their houses were unlike any that have been described hitherto. The largest measured thirty-five feet by twelve, with a height of twenty-five feet. They are raised from the ground on posts, about four feet high,

passing through circular pieces of wood, which are intended to keep out rats and other vermin. The sides and roof are continuous, and slope sharply upwards, giving to an end view the appearance of an acute triangle, while a side-view exhibits a long ridge rising suddenly at



NATIVE HOUSE.

each end to a point, and descending by a straight line of gable. The roof is neatly and smoothly thatched with grass, and the sides are covered in with sheets of a bark-like substance. The entrance is at one end overhung by the gable, like a curtain, with a small stage to ascend by.

Their weapons consist of bows, arrows, and stone clubs. The bamboo scoop and the cane loop were seen here for the first time by the people of the *Fly*, but their use is very different from that supposed by Mr. Jukes, who imagined that the loop was used to hold the sago palm while they extracted the pith with the scoop. The



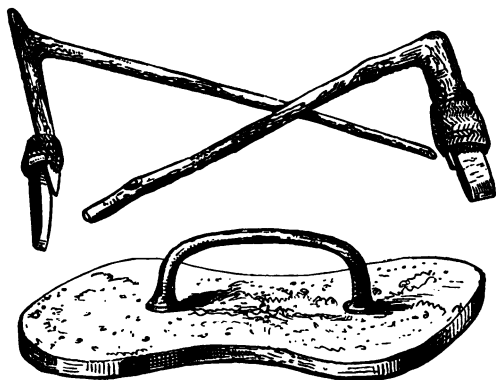
NATIVE CANOE.

fact is that the latter is used in cutting off the heads of their enemies, which are afterwards slung by the loop for convenience of carrying. These horrid articles form part of each man's equipment.

The loop is also used by the Prince of Wales islanders, but civilisation is helping them to do their bloody work

with more expedition and ease. English knives are being gradually substituted for the clumsy bamboo contrivance.

Their arrows are of four kinds, viz., light reed, plain, broadheaded bamboo, and barbed; the latter, which are often tastefully carved, are procured from the tribes of the interior and although it is said that the art of poison-



WAR-WEAPONS.

ing arrows is unknown in New Guinea, wounds from these are much dreaded, as they are barbed with human bones.

The natives of the Prince of Wales group and surrounding islands poison their arrows by sticking them in a human corpse, which is left to fester in the sun, a custom with which the Papuans can scarcely fail to have become acquainted in the course of their visits to

those islands. The chief officer of one of the vessels trading in Torres Straits informed me that whilst bartering with these natives two of his men were slightly wounded in the arm and leg by these arrows. He



NATIVE WITH HEAD-LOOP.

immediately pulled off to the ship, but before he got there both of the men were mad, and in less than two hours from the time they were wounded they were both dead.

Fig-trees are very common, attain a great size, and produce abundance of fine fruit.

Its dark tangled forests rival those of South America or Ceylon in luxuriance, and abound in varieties of beautiful birds—among which is that most beautiful of birds, the bird of paradise—monkeys, buffalo, and tigers.

The bird of paradise is for many reasons worthy of a passing word. It builds a rough nest high up in the trees of fine grass and down. Its eggs are sometimes white and sometimes pink spotted with red, and about the size of a sparrow's egg. The birds are very devoted to their young. The mother does not leave its nest of eggs until they are hatched, the father fetching her food the whole time of sitting. If the male bird be shot, the hen will continue to sit upon her eggs without food and die of starvation.

The natives are very foolish, shooting the birds at all seasons, and rapidly diminishing their number. They shoot them for their skins, which they sell at a good price; but the birds are the saviours of their country from beetles and every form of destructive insects. In the crop of one bird has been found forty or fifty large beetles, besides innumerable smaller insects; should the value of their skins lead to their destruction, a plague of these things must ravage the country. It is a curious fact that these birds never alight on the ground.

The birds vary in size and in colour. Some are all velvety black, save the breast, which is delicate sky-blue; others are all crimson, save the wing covers and tail,

which are black; others have black bodies variegated with salmon. The head-tuft is sometimes white, sometimes green, sometimes salmon, and sometimes variegated.



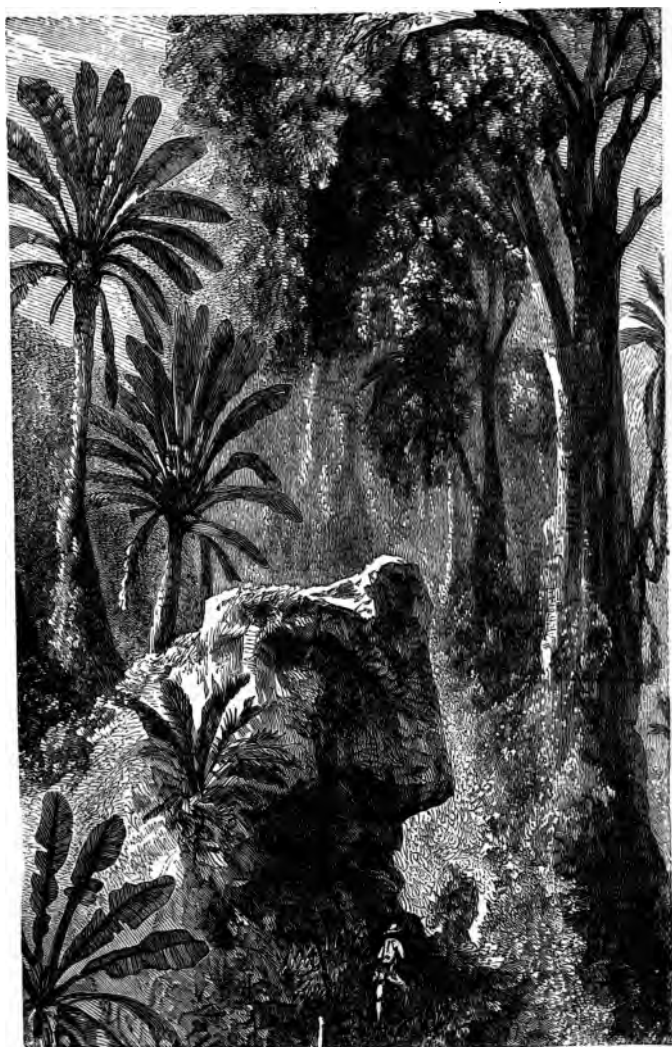
BIRD OF PARADISE.

The tiger of this district—known by the natives as the mollah—is equal in size to the tiger of Bengal, but is a much handsomer animal. The ground colour of its skin

is white, and this is marked with cross bands of black and chestnut. The following encounter of Captain Lawson with one will show the mettle of the beast :—

“When passing through the forest I suddenly came up with Aboo, who was standing still watching a grotto-like mass of rock, behind which, he said, the mollah had taken refuge. They had seen it and fired upon it, but it had made no attempt to attack them. After discharging his piece Billy had secured the safety of his person by climbing a tree, and he was very loth to come down ; but a threat to pepper him with a few small shot accelerated his movements, and soon brought him to *terra firma*. Seeing he was in a very frightened state, I deprived him of his rifle to prevent accidents, but made him do duty as a beater.

“For a time we were at a standstill. No one cared to approach the spot where the mollah was supposed to be lurking, and the beast seemed to be equally reluctant to commence the attack. Stone-throwing and shouting had no effect whatever ; and at last I lost patience and ventured to cautiously creep towards the grotto, moving by degrees, a foot or less at a time and keeping my weather-eye open for fear of a squall. When I had approached to within ten or twelve yards, I could see the cunning brute's eyes glaring from out of a dim recess formed by the overhanging creepers and plants. Every now and then he gave a knowing blink, and a whisking motion showed that his tail was sweeping from side to side. He was evidently preparing for a spring ; but he



THE MOLLAH'S RETREAT.



delayed it a little too long ; for, raising my rifle, I brought the sight to bear between his eyes and fired. With a horrible, barking kind of noise he came tumbling out, and received the contents of the second barrel behind his shoulder. This diverted him from his intended attack upon me ; but, though badly hurt, he made straight for my men, who disappeared without firing a shot ; Billy mounting a tree with the agility of a monkey.

“Finding himself distanced, the mollah, who had lost the use of one of his fore-legs, turned back and again came towards me, before I had had time to ram home a bullet. There was nothing left for it but to run, which I did till I went sprawling over a fallen tree-trunk. Before I could rise the beast was upon me, and with a growl of satisfaction, as I thought, and anticipating certain vengeance, took me into his clutches. I had a long dagger-knife in my waist-belt, and I drew it with all speed, and fright lending me more than my usual strength, I drove it up to the hilt in the mollah's side. Turning savagely on feeling the pain, it seized the knife in its powerful jaws and broke it. This was its last act, for immediately it fell dead without a groan, and with great relief of mind I extricated myself from under the carcase. The animal measured from nose to the root of the tail seven feet three inches.”

A few days' excursion into the interior brought to view a backbone of lofty mountains apparently extending to the centre of the island, with peaks surpassing those of Australia in altitude. Not far from the coast there are

remarkable table-topped mountains estimated to be quite twenty thousand feet in elevation, whose summits appear to be covered with snow. But its highest mountain is said to be more than twenty-three thousand feet above the sea, which is twice the height of Mont Blanc, and as it rises, not as mountains generally do, from a plain which itself is nearly half their height above the sea, but from one which is only a couple of thousand feet, it must present a sight of extraordinary grandeur.

Though but a comparatively small part of this country has been explored, it is quite clear that nature has lavishly bestowed on it her choicest gifts.

Its open lands are covered with cocoa-nut, banana, sago, fig, orange, lemon, and other fruit-trees, while its forests abound with valuable timber, as iron-wood, ebony, and canary wood, also with fragrant barks and spices. Amongst the trees of the mainland is one said to be the tallest in the world. In general form it is like the English elm. It is covered at one season with clusters of star-shaped blossoms of brilliant scarlet and yellow, and at another with fruit like our filberts the size of a lemon. One specimen of this tree measured three hundred feet in height, and another, three hundred and thirty-seven; their tops appearing almost lost away in the sky. The trunk of the larger of the two measured no less than eighty-four feet seven inches. These enormous trees grow sometimes in clumps, and sometimes a single one stands out alone amongst lower vegetation; when seen in this way the impression produced is sublime in the extreme.

The sea that washes its shores supplies an almost inexhaustible mine of wealth in the shape of trepang, pearls, tortoiseshell, and fish.

To this catalogue of natural riches the most valuable of all—gold—may be added. It is quite natural, therefore, that this interesting, valuable, and almost unknown island should present attractions, not only to explorers, but also to both scientific and commercial men.



ANDAMAN ISLANDS.



ANDAMAN ISLANDS.

CHAPTER I.

THE PEOPLE.

THE general contour of the great Andaman group is an undulating surface of hills, descending in elevation from Saddle Mountain, two thousand four hundred feet, on the south island, to hills of eight hundred feet, five hundred feet, and so on, to the sea level, with apparent plane surfaces of some extent in the intermediate spaces; the whole being clothed with a dense forest of gigantic trees, underwood, and twining creepers.

There are no villages or permanent residents in any part of the islands, the tribe inhabiting them being in constant motion from one locality to another in search of food. They go in groups of from fifty to several hundreds, and seldom remain above a few days in one place. Their numbers are supposed not to exceed five thousand.

An Andaman hut may be considered the rudest attempt of the human species to secure shelter from the weather. It consists of a few sticks, fastened together at the top, the other end being fixed in the ground. A thatch composed of branches and leaves completes the structure. Or the long reeds that grow all along the coast are bound together in the form of a cone, and the space cleared beneath: an opening being left in each case on the sheltered side, just large enough to creep into. The floor is strewn with dry leaves. In these huts we found the skulls of wild hogs suspended from the roof, but little else, for when they move they bear away with them their weapons.

Until recently these miserable savages were supposed to be cannibals, but this idea has been satisfactorily refuted; and if they ever do eat human flesh, they do not do so by preference, but from starvation and hunger.

Like all aboriginal tribes, the Andamanese had been maligned and shot down till people took the trouble to understand them. False and dreadful tales led sailors driven on the islands by stress of weather to attack their inhabitants, till retaliation resulted in giving some ground for the false ideas regarding them. In truth, naked and defenceless save for their poisoned arrows, exposed to death by hunger when sea and land failed to yield spontaneous food, treated as vermin to be hunted instead of human beings to be civilised, all through these centuries, the marvel is that they have not become bad as they are described. They never had a chance as a race, or as individuals, till Lord Cornwallis sent English



ANDAMANS AND HUT.



officers to survey their island, and the settlement which bore his name was, in 1789, formed in the North Andaman.

Their principal food, however, is fish and shell-fish, rats, guanas, lizards, and snakes. They have no pot or vessel that will bear the action of fire; they eat the fruit of the hard mangrove and esculent herbs and roots, after steeping them in an embanked puddle of mud and water. They are expert fishers in their own way. They have hand nets and wicker baskets, but do not appear to use hook and line or large nets. When the tide retires, they seize the fish left in pools on the irregular coral beach, or spear and shoot them with arrows in the water, often by the light of a torch; and sometimes two or more, armed with a sharpened bit of hoop iron, will dive into deep water and even seize the shark.

When they fail to obtain a sufficient supply of food at one spot, they proceed to another. Their canoes are usually hollowed out by fire and sharp implements made of stone, coral, and shell: the largest seen could contain eight persons, and had an outrigger to steady it in the water. Spears and arrows are their only weapons, both being barbed and headed with hard wood, fish bones, or sharp shells.

Both sexes go quite naked; but some of them wear a cord and tassel of fibre round their waist. Attached to the cord is a boar's tusk, sharp shell, or sharpened bit of iron. They pass their whole time in search of food or in sleep. In the morning, to prevent the annoyance of insects, they plaster themselves with mud from

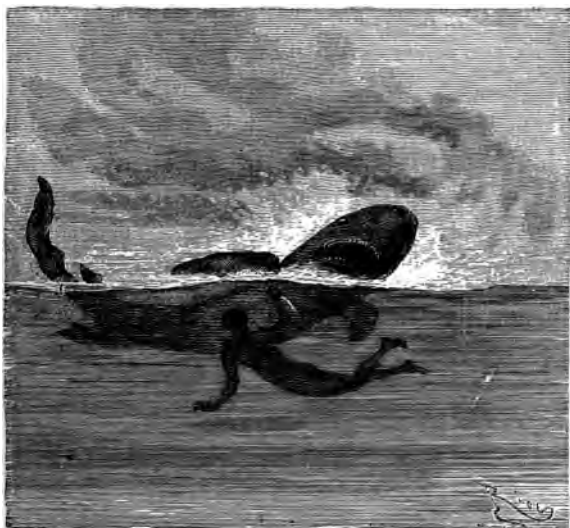
head to foot, or wallow in it like buffaloes. While the women repair to the reefs at the recess of the tide, the men hunt in the woods, or perch themselves on trees or rocks ready to shoot large fish at a distance, or to



FISH-SHOOTING.

spring upon those that happen to approach them. Practice has rendered them unerring marksmen both with the bow and spear.

Their suspicion of strangers is unremitting. Sometimes they express their aversion in a loud and threatening voice and with contemptuous signs. At other times, with the most insidious intent, they assume a show of humility, appearing quiet and docile, and affecting to enter into a friendly conference. After accepting with



SHARK HUNTING.

greed such articles as are presented to them, they set up a shout of defiance and discharge their arrows at the donors.

On the approach of a boat they frequently lie in ambush, sending one of their gang to the water's edge

to endeavour to allure the strangers on shore. The moment they succeed they rush out of their hiding-places. Some plunge into the water to secure the boat, while others, with cruel and savage treachery, exhibit their sanguinary disposition, by rushing on their unfortunate victims, seizing their throats with their hands and teeth, piercing their bodies with their sharp weapons, and pounding them with stones.

Such has been and still is to a great extent the true character of this barbarous race. Their unremitting hostility to those whom they suspect of desiring to invade their land, has been ascribed to two causes, both being perhaps correct.

The one is, that they retain a tradition of their origin as once being in a state of slavery, and originally cast ashore on these islands from a wrecked slaver, the master and crew of which they put to death; and the other is, that becoming isolated from their kinsmen on the peninsula, they believe that there is a general desire on the part of those who visit them to kidnap and bear them away into slavery; for it is known that during the north-east monsoon, parties from the Malay coast of Sumatra visit the Andamans in their prahus for the purpose of collecting edible nests and sea-slugs, or biche-de-mer, and that they really do enslave such as they can seize.

"Their religion," observes Colonel Symes, "is expressed in adoration of the sun, the moon, the genii of the woods, &c. In the spirit of the storms they confess

the influence of a malignant being, and during the southwest monsoon, when tempests prevail with unusual violence, they deprecate his wrath with wild choruses, which they chant in congregations on the beach or on some rock that overhangs the ocean."

Let us hope that an all-wise Providence, which has entrusted Great Britain with the humanising of these islanders, will bless and prosper the good work entered on after a century of inaction.



ANDAMAN ISLANDS.

CHAPTER II.

ADVENTURES.

UNDER the merciful orders of the Government of India, which directs that musketry is on no occasion to be had recourse to against the aborigines, except in extreme cases, there is now less rancour shown by them towards us ; and although there has not yet been any general attempt on their part to fraternise, they have already passed from open hostility and robbing and pilfering in daylight before the eyes of our people, to cat-like stealing at night, usually of articles of food. Even occasional timid and voluntary approaches are made by some one of their tribe.

It has often been necessary, in the interests of the natives themselves, to bring some of their number to justice, and to do this it has been necessary to make an attack upon some of their tribes.

During one of these encounters, four men and a woman were seized: the woman, by means of her agility and the free use of her nails and teeth, contrived to slip from her captors. One of the men, also, although heavily handcuffed, managed to get out of his guard-room unseen by the sentry, who was only made aware of his escape by hearing a plunge in the water, and seeing his prisoner rise at some distance to the surface to breathe, then dive again and reappear on the main shore beyond. The following notes relating to the three others captured on this occasion, drawn up by Lieutenant Hillard of the Indian Navy, will repay perusal:—

Thursday, 10th January.—Went up in the launch, and found the three aborigines captured at Viper Island in the stocks, and apparently quite indifferent; taken to the boat, handcuffed with their hands behind their backs. In beating down, they seemed to expect to be landed whenever we neared the shore: they instantly asked for *punno* (water), and all three at the same moment managed to bring their hands in front.

On landing at Ross Island they were very sullen, but ate plantains freely, or anything else that was given them. During the night one remained awake, and two out of the three managed to get off their handcuffs, their wrists being remarkably small.

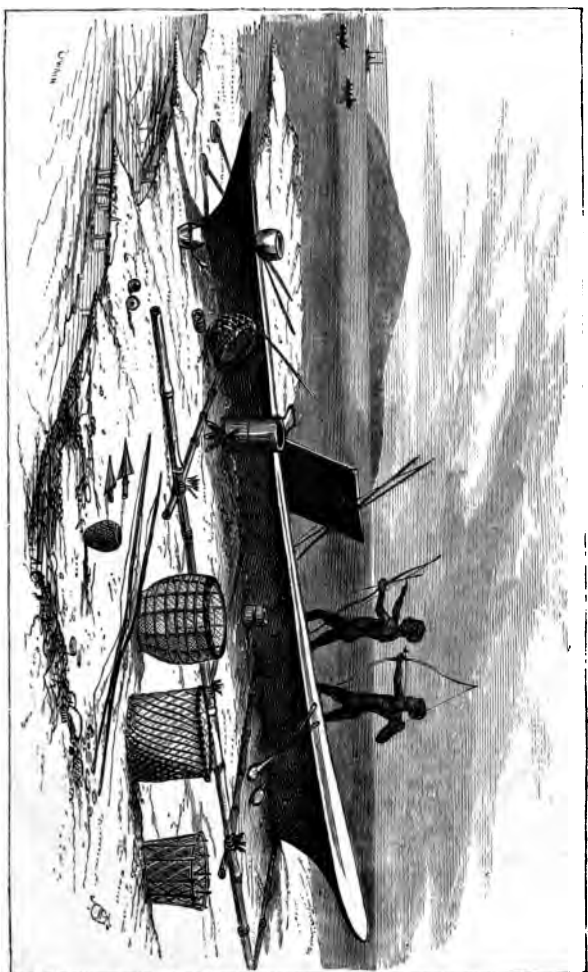
A man was appointed to look after each, and they named them Punch, Friday, and Crusoe, with the surname of Blair. They did not appear the least astonished

at anything they saw, and did not like the men over them to leave them.

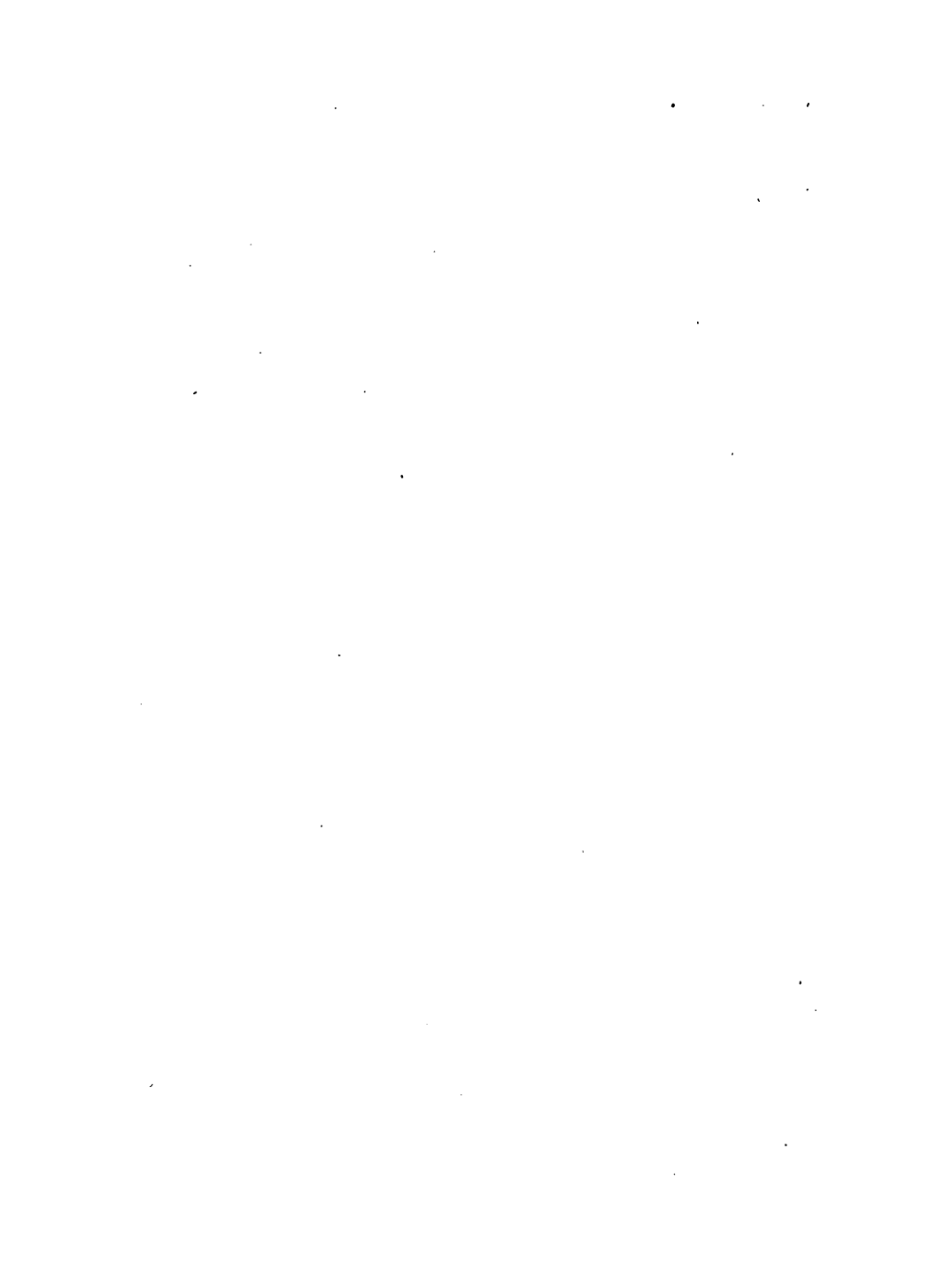
11th.—Fish being brought for them, Crusoe turned cook, opening and cleaning them with his teeth, and, when done, dividing all equally; this finished, he roasted green plaintains, and they all ate enormously. During the night the one on watch, Punch, fancied the sentry was asleep, and awoke the others to be ready for a run. He then crept to the bottom of the bed, but a box on the ear soon convinced him that if Jack did sleep, it was with his weather-eye open.

When taken they were quite in a state of nature, but to-day they were dressed and taken up to the Superintendent's house. Here they appeared somewhat surprised, particularly at a large mirror, at which they grinned. Mr. Punch wished to take ornaments from the neck of one of the native women. They now are not the least afraid, although at times very sullen.

14th.—They seem to improve daily, and their health is good. They all went to see the men at work at their different trades, but seemed only to care for the blacksmith and tinker. Punch seeing an English woman, wished to kiss her, and Friday took the chain, a silver one, off an ayah's neck, which was of course returned. Seeing me, he came up, and taking hold of my beard, put his hand inside my shirt collar, to see whether I had a chain of any kind. He also made signs to another officer, that he would cut his throat for his gold chain and ring.



ANDAMAN CANOE.



They are apparently fond of all animals, and have constantly a cat or a dog in their arms. They are very suspicious of our food, will take anything uncooked ; and share all they get equally. At one meal they will eat a bunch of plaintains weighing nine seers, or eighteen pounds, besides meat. When the natives of India are near them they mutter at them : it is impossible to catch the words, but it appears from their manner to be abuse.

They were asking for their fish to-day, and having none, a pigeon was given to each, which they cleaned and boiled, but they were very much puzzled to see four killed at one shot. Crusoe seeing a spyglass, took it up, and brought it to the " ready," taking aim at the same time ; he then made a noise with his mouth, and threw his head back, as if he were killed.

15th.—The aborigines again attacked and wounded the convicts working in the jungle, also one of the Sebundy Guard ; but three were taken prisoners, and brought over. Two are old men, and the other is a nice-looking lad.

One of them, the oldest, who has been injured in the back, apparently by a shot some time before, knocked over eight natives before he was taken prisoner. Some bows and arrows were taken with these men ; who are nearly the same as the others, and all about the same height. Their teeth appear to be all worn down flat, not sharp, like other people's.

On their being taken to the barracks, their friends

came to meet them, but they were not of the same party apparently, and they did not show any sign of pleasure at seeing them. Signs were made to take them to the wash-house, and here they were scrubbed, except the injured man, who was carefully placed on a cot until the arrival of medical aid, when he was fomented on the back, and had some medicine, and he slept for some time, and could then eat a good supper.

At night these three were taken to another part of the barracks, when they all became frightened, and clung to the men in charge, and begged them not to let them go. To make them quite easy, they were shown where they were going, and they went to bed, quite contentedly. They dance and sing every evening, but they require to be constantly watched, as they want everything they see.

One of the men passed during the day with some fresh pork, and they caught hold of him; and insisted on having some, calling out—

“Rhogo! Rhogo!” (pig, pig.)

The instant food is given to them they eat it; and if you tell them that they do not want it, they draw in their stomachs as though they wished you to understand they were empty.

On landing, and seeing a man on horseback, they were in ecstasies of delight, all three desiring to get on the horse's back at the same time. They minutely examined his eyes and mouth, and crept under him. It was found impossible to instruct them; for, although they possess

strong imitative powers, attempts to impart knowledge of any sort proved fruitless. At length they began to pine in health, and kept continually gazing at the ocean, and pointing in the direction of their island home.

One fierce night, when the wind blew so strong that no boat could venture out, they disappeared from their keeper, and a boat having been missed by some one, it was presumed that they had taken it. Next day they were brought back by the guardboat-men at the mouth of the river, who, perceiving the little bark deliberately putting to sea in such tempestuous weather, put out and seized it.

Shortly after this one of these savages died, and finding it utterly hopeless to instruct the two others, who were also unwell, they were taken back to their island, and landed on the exact spot where they were captured, loaded with such articles as would likely be acceptable to others of their tribe. They exhibited great joy at being again set free, carefully removed bundle after bundle from the boat to an open spot on the beach, shook hands with the boat's crew, and disappeared in the thicket with as much on their shoulders as they could bear with them.

One who has lived amongst them says :—

Our party took as much food with it as it could carry, but lost the greater part in forcing its way through the tangled jungle. For fourteen days we kept together, and were greatly distressed for want of food and drink, and nearly devoured by leeches and other vermin.

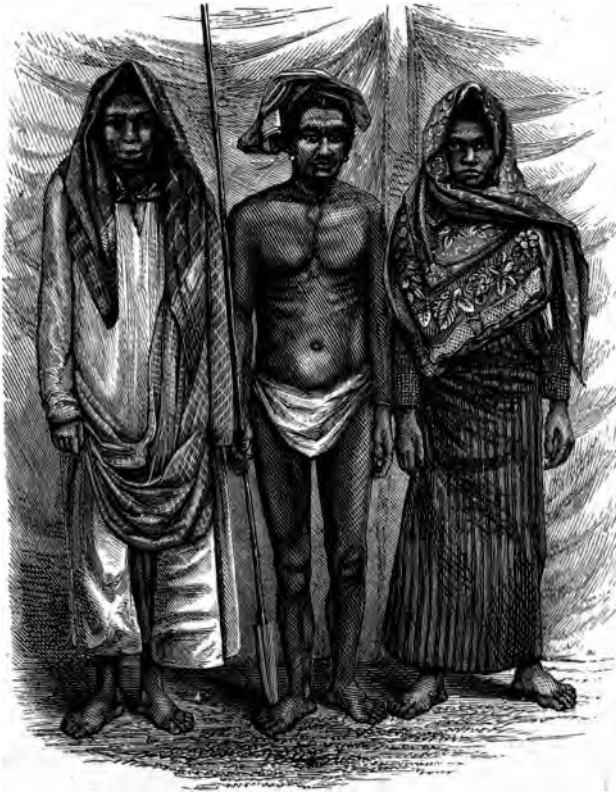
On the fourteenth day we were surrounded and attacked by a large body of the aborigines, and although by supplicating attitudes we did all we could to conciliate them, they rushed with fury upon us and appeared to destroy all. I received three wounds, a blow on the head which knocked me down, a stab in the chest, and a deep



ANDAMAN MODERN HUT.

cut in my arm. Assuming death till the party left, I rose, and along with three others, also badly wounded, moved on I knew not where. Seeing savages approaching, we hid ourselves, but, perceiving us, they fired their arrows. My two comrades were killed, and I was wounded in two more places.

The savages then came up, and finding me still alive,



ANDAMAN MODERN DRESS.

they made me leave my hiding-place ; and after talking a great deal amongst themselves, for some reason un-

known to me, they dressed my wounds with red earth, raised me by putting their arms under mine, removed me to a boat, and took me to an island distant about two hours, where they placed me in a hut, and I soon got better. During the entire time I was with them I lived as they did, wearing no clothes, and having my hair always cut close, by a bit of glass, by one of their women.

At first they regarded me with suspicion; if even I took up one of their bows they would remove it away from me, and make me sit down. But after four months one Pooteah made over his daughter, Leepah, twenty years of age, to me in marriage.

I think I must have seen in all fifteen thousand inhabitants, men, women, and children, in the different islands; and usually encountered one of their encampments every three or four miles: their chief abodes being on or near the coast. But parties go daily into the forest for fruit, wild pig, &c.

All appear one tribe, and speak one language. They are not cannibals, nor do they eat uncooked food, and although savage to strangers, they are kind to one another. They did not appear to me to have any religion. They have no knowledge of shame, and are bold and fearless. Their few wants are easily satisfied; subsisting entirely on wild fruit, pig, and fish.

The women seldom go into the jungle along with the men, but remain on the beach cooking, and carrying water, sometimes several miles, in hollow bamboos. They

are always the barbers of the tribe, shaving and tattooing with a bit of glass ground in the shape and size of a bean, as sharp as a penknife. They are also the doctors, applying red earth and turtle oil externally, and scarify freely with the sharp glass in every case of sickness. They carry their children slung over the shoulder by means of the bark of a tree, and are very much attached to them, exhibiting intense grief when one dies.

Burials generally take place the day after death, with weeping and marked signs of emotion on the part of the near relatives. The body, being tied up in a bundle of thongs, so as to occupy a small space, is placed in a hole and covered up. Some months afterwards, the bones are disinterred, and divided amongst the deceased relatives.

Four days is a long period for a party to occupy an encampment. They are a powerful race; climb trees like monkeys, are swift runners, dexterous fishers and hunters, great swimmers and divers, some four or five dive together and bring up a large fish. They have keen senses, eyes, nose, and ears; their vision penetrating great depths into the sea and jungles.



THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.





THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.

CHAPTER I.

A JOURNEY IN IT.

THE Argentine Republic is in South America, and as it now is, consists of fourteen provinces.*

The city of Buenos Ayres, the capital of the Republic, contains about two hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. It is situated on very low-lying ground on the banks of the River Plate, about two hundred miles from the ocean. Indeed, so low are the banks of the river, that in coming into the roadstead the traveller would readily imagine that he was looking on nothing more than a grove of trees growing in the ocean.

The River Plate, opposite Buenos Ayres, is about thirty

* Buenos Ayres, Entre Rios, Corrientes, Santa Fé, San Luis, Mendoza, San Juan, Cordova, Rioja, Santiago del Estero, Catamarca, Tucuman, Salta, and Juyjuy.

miles in width, and so shallow, that our vessel, drawing from fifteen to twenty feet of water, was obliged to drop her anchor seven or eight miles off the city.

Having come to our moorings, we were immediately surrounded by a multitude of whale-boats, manned almost exclusively by loud-tongued Italians, who seem to enjoy a monopoly of the harbour work. In one of these miserable boats I was carried towards the beach for ten shillings. Only "towards" the beach, for the river happening to be, as is not unfrequently the case, very low, I was transferred from the boat to a high-wheeled cart, in which with all my belongings I was pulled through mud and sand, with shout and yell, into the largest city of South America.

Even looking at this cart, one feels that he is in a new country; for to it are yoked three horses in a manner that would rouse the astonishment, and most probably the contempt, of any English carter. One horse is between the shafts and before the cart, as he ought to be; but the two assistants are merely lashed to the points of the shafts by a strap passing round their bodies, so that they have to pull, as a sailor would say, "broad-side on."

After a further disbursement of gold, I was able to get quit of cart and porter, and sit down to collect my scattered faculties in the handsome Hôtel du Paix, where I got very little for about a sovereign per diem.

The streets of Buenos Ayres are narrow, and excessively ill-paved and lighted; and though there are many



SANTIAGO.—MARKET-PLACE.

good shops and stores, they are not so showily or expensively fitted up as in our home cities ; so that the streets present a rather dull and uninteresting appearance. The city is in everything but its wealth far inferior to Santiago, where buildings are better and streets wider, and in better condition.

The houses are nearly all of one storey, with a flat roof, or azotéo, which serves as a sort of promenade for the members of the family, or as a capital position for a band of riflemen in case of a disturbance in the streets, as the Spaniards proved in the case of General White-locke, whose name is still repeated by them, though coupled with terms rather disparaging to the fame of British military prowess.

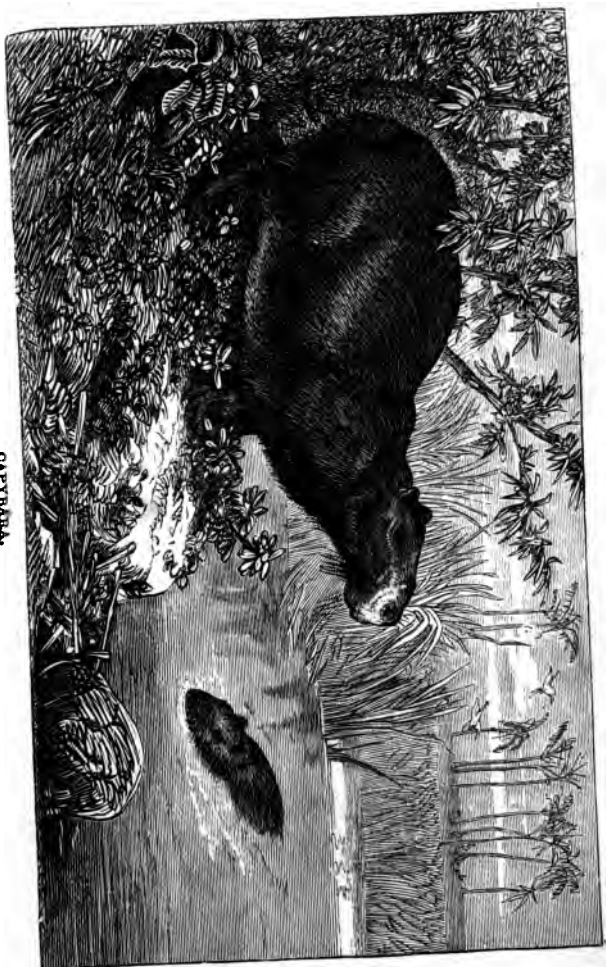
But get out of the streets, and enter the courtyard inside the houses, and hidden beauty is found. Many of the houses have an open courtyard inside, upon which open all the doors and windows. This court is roofed with wire netting, along which are trained grape-vines and many other creepers remarkable for the richness of their blossoms or the fragrance of their perfume ; while in the centre plays a fountain surrounded by large vases filled with the most beautiful plants and flowers. Thus is the visitor often struck with the great contrast between the dull and deserted appearance of a house while he knocks at the outer door, and the beautiful scene which displays itself to his delighted eye as he is ushered into the inner court.

But I was anxious to lose no time among the enchant-

ments of the great city ; so, embarking on board one of the many handsome Clyde-built boats which ply on the river Uruguay, I made my escape from screaming boatmen, jostling porters, garlic, oil, and excessive charges.

After sailing about fifty miles above Buenos Ayres, we arrive at the junction of the Parana and the Uruguay, which together form the Rio de la Plata, or River Plate. Entering the Uruguay, we steam on for about two hundred miles before arriving at the town of Concordia, which may be called the capital of Entre Rios. The river-banks on the Entre Rios side are clothed with thick woods, through parts of which the jaguar and puma, or South American tiger and lion, still wander in comparative security. The left bank presents a totally different aspect—being in many places rocky and precipitous, and the rock being limestone, the herbage is of that short and rich green kind which is always found to cover limestone formations. At last we arrive at the town of Concordia. Here we are once more beset by boatmen, and on landing by porters ; but we now comfort ourselves by reflecting that it will be the last occasion for some time to come on which we shall be called on to submit to such a trial.

Concordia is a town of about five thousand inhabitants. It possesses several good shops, hotels, billiard-rooms, a couple of schools, and a post-office, but no church : it drives a pretty good export trade in wool, sheepskins, hides, tallow, bones, and horsehair. Here, being an



CAPYBARA.

exceedingly ingenious master of signs, with the help of Spanish, French, and Italian, I succeed in obtaining a horse, driver, and carriage, to convey me to the scene of my future labours.

The carriage was drawn by three raw, wild horses, yoked abreast, with a fourth acting as leader, and ridden by a ragged, bare-legged boy. A second boy drove along some twelve or fifteen spare horses, from among which fresh ones were in turn to be yoked at certain stages on the road. The harness was principally composed of plaited thongs of raw hide; and, though not remarkably elegant, it would be, doubtless, wonderfully tough and durable.

In this carriage we went rattling over an undulating country with numerous sand-hills, extensive palm forests plentifully watered by wood-fringed rivers, and dotted here and there with small lagunas, or lakes, in whose muddy waters are standing troops of cattle or wild mares, enjoying all the luxury of a tepid bath, or feeding on the succulent reeds and water plants which grow round the margin, or float on the surface.

Having safely surmounted all the difficulties of wading through mud and marsh, struggling through deep sand, and fording streams, we finally arrived at the Estancia house, where our arrival was loudly announced by the clamour of from fifty to sixty dogs of every type and breed known, or imaginable.

The Estancia house was a long one-storied brick building, thatched with long grass, which is bound on by strips

of raw hide taken either from donkeys or from the carpincho. This last animal, called also the capybara, or water hog, is a rodent about the size of a common pig. It frequents the borders of rivers, in the waters of which it dives and swims with much ease.

Round the house ran a corridor or verandah, and near it were a few huts for the peons, or servants, a galpòn, or wool-shed, pens for enclosing the sheep, and a corral, or small yard for catching horses in. An adjoining garden was surrounded by an impenetrable hedge of prickly pear, containing maize, pumpkins, sweet and water melons, sweet potatoes, mandioca, and tobacco, which were sheltered from the sun by peach, nectarine, fig, orange, and quince trees.

This is the end of our journey.

In this humble abode, where the household furniture is limited to a few chairs, tables, and camp beds, with no servant except a native woman to cook, resides the owner of from fifty to sixty thousand acres of beautiful pasture land, on which graze forty thousand sheep, fourteen thousand head of cattle, two thousand mares, and five hundred working horses.

The owner of such a property in England would be regarded as one decidedly in very easy circumstances, whereas in South America he often makes himself and all about him uncomfortable, and materially injures his digestion by vain efforts to make his expenses account and his sales account balance as they ought to do in his big ledger. Often is his supply of ready money woefully

meagre, and often has some new undertaking, or some improvement of the estate, to be delayed till the fine merino wool is ready for the market, and brings the happy Estanciero the magnificent sum of fourpence per pound !



THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.

CHAPTER II.

ITS NATURAL HISTORY.

THE hard life of the farmer may be relieved, however, by good sport.

Among the wild animals most commonly met with are the puma and jaguar. There are plenty of deer, tigers, cats, foxes, opossums—which are furnished with a pouch on the lower part of the abdomen in which they carry their young like the kangaroo—skunks; biscachas, or South American marmots; besides alligators, large lizards, about five feet long, and armadillos of two species.

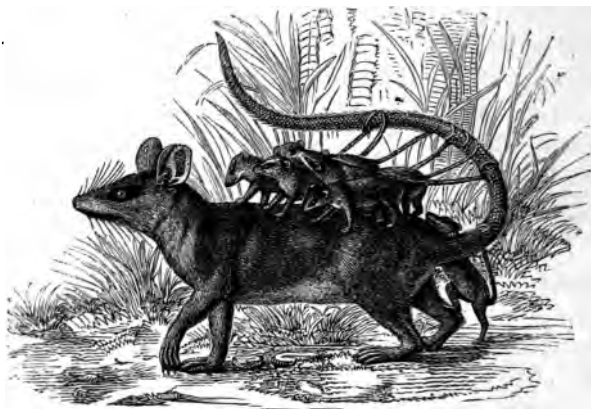
The armadillo is peculiar to this quarter of the world, and a remarkable creature it is. It is clad in a hard coat, strikingly resembling the coat of mail or plate armour of our ancestors, and about as hard as the shell of the

tortoise. The head may be said to have a helmet and the shoulders a buckler. Its under parts are without armour, hair taking its place. Its legs are short and strong, and furnished with nails which aid it in digging into the earth. It is an accomplished burrower. When pursued, if time permit, it flies to its ordinary hole; if not, it quickly buries itself, and but for the protrusion of its tail might generally thus escape. The tail, however, is long and stiff, and thus at once tells to its pursuers its whereabouts, and furnishes the means of its capture. It feeds on a great variety of food. Vegetables, ants, almost all insects, carcasses of animals, and, unless specially protected, even burrows into the graves of the dead.

Among the feathered tribes may be mentioned the *nandu*, *avestruz*, or South American ostrich, eagles of two species; innumerable kinds of hawks, kites, and vultures; the *ciguena*, or stork; two species of heron, one of which, called the *gruya*, is a most elegant bird, of pure white plumage; bitterns, flamingoes, and a host of others of the same class, which pass their time wading in the shallow, reedy lagunas.

The flamingo is about five feet high. Its shape will be best gathered from the accompanying drawing. It is a beautiful bird of most pure white and bright carnation plumage, and of a light and elegant build. Its nest is one of the most extraordinary in the world. It is built of stones and mud in the shape of a sugar-loaf, such as you may see in a grocer's window. At the top is a

hollow containing the eggs, which are two or three in number and of about the size of goose-eggs. ; On this small and elevated hollow the mother bird "sits," or stands; for her position is neither sitting nor standing, but somewhat of both. These curious and beautiful birds are also found in many parts of Africa, and in other parts of the world.



OPOSSUM.

The puma or panther is much more common in the settled portions than the jaguar. Though naturally of a shy, retiring nature, he is a most formidable antagonist when brought to bay. He is sometimes very destructive to live-stock, and has been known to kill as many as forty sheep in one night. He seems very partial to the flesh of young colts, of which he kills a great number in certain localities.

When the half-devoured carcass of a colt is discovered carefully covered with grass, torn up for the purpose, the hunters immediately get together a number of their best



FLAMINGO AND NEST.

dogs, and follow up the trail through the tangled and almost impassable depths of the monte, or wood, where

the depredator is generally found snugly ensconced among the branches of some old patriarch of the forest. His fancied security is quickly and rudely destroyed by a rifle bullet, which passes through his brain, killing him on the spot, or else, breaking his shoulder-blade, tumbles him to the ground, where he is speedily dispatched by the dogs.

The jaguar is a much more formidable animal, not nearly so anxious to avoid the track of man, and of a more savage disposition. There is, however, still alive in Entre Rios, old Don Tomas Maidana, who, armed with nothing more than a facon, or knife, of about eighteen inches in length, encountered a jaguar in the woods, and after a lengthened struggle, during which the natural beauty of poor Tomas's physiognomy was much disfigured, some said entirely destroyed, he at last succeeded in killing the huge brute, whose skin when stretched out would measure about eight feet with the tail on.

The savageness of this animal may be judged of from the following fact, related by Commodore Page, formerly of the United States navy:—This gentleman, when in command of the screw steamer *Water Witch*, was on a cruise of exploration up the rivers Salado and Vermejo, and one day the attention of all on board was attracted by the sight of an immense jaguar swimming across the river ahead of the steamer. It soon, however, perceived that it could not swim swiftly enough to get clear of the vessel, and at once turning round with a savage roar, it seized the bows in its teeth, and began freely to make

use of its powerful claws against the monster that thus endeavoured to stop its course across the stream. Its futile efforts to destroy the steamer were, however, quickly brought to a close by a rifle bullet, and its skin is now, I believe, preserved as one of the finest of its kind in a museum in North America.

The deer is often caught by the natives by means of the bolas, which consists of three round balls of stone,



JAGUAR.

connected by thongs of raw hide, about six feet in length. By a native expert in the use of them, they can be thrown from horseback to a distance of from eighty to a hundred yards. They are thrown so as to entangle the hind legs of the animal, and thus prevent him from running, when the horseman gallops up and despatches him with his knife.

The fox is not of the red colour of the British fox, but

rather of a greyish or brindled hue. He seldom attacks a full grown sheep, but is very destructive to young lambs. His cunning seems to be the same in all parts of the world, and I once saw it displayed in rather a curious manner, where, in order to save himself the trouble of carrying his booty, he took advantage of the well-known propensity of very young lambs to follow the first animal they see on awakening from their sleep in the grass. The fox in question was seen trotting quietly past a flock of sheep, till seeing a young lamb snugly dozing in a tuft of long grass, he went up to it and wakened it by a gentle push with his paw. The lamb jumped up, and, with loud and clamorous bleat, hurried with unsteady steps after the fox, who trotted silently before it till they entered the wood, where, of course, the illusion of the poor lamb was speedily dispelled as the fox regaled himself on its tender flesh.

The fox of South America is not nearly so swift as his British brother, and is often run down by the dogs of the country, although he uses many arts and wiles to save himself. His favourite trick is "shamming dead;" but on one occasion I saw him completely checkmated by an old Newfoundland dog.

A party of horsemen were galloping across camp one day, followed by several dogs, when a fox got up, and was quickly run into, and after being thoroughly worried by the dogs, was left for dead. Some of the party, however, happening to look back, saw Reynard skulking off as quickly as his wounds permitted him. The view-

halloo was once more given, and after a second short run, he was pulled down by the side of a small laguna and subjected to a second mauling which appeared effectual to all except the Newfoundland. This dog, after all the others had retired, took up the fox, and walking into the water, laid him on the bottom, and stood on him for a few minutes. He then dragged him on to the bank, and lying down beside him, watched him attentively, but did not seem quite satisfied till he had again immersed him in the water. Seeing no signs of returning life in his victim, he at last came lumbering after his companions, casting back, however, many a wistful glance to make sure of the efficacy of his treatment.



THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.

CHAPTER III.

CATTLE-HUNT.

THE great institution of the Argentine Republic is the farm, and the great event of the farm year is the parting off fat cattle for market.

A tropero, or cattle-dealer, arrives at the Estancia, and all is at once bustle and preparation for the morrow, during which from four to five hundred fat bullocks must be made up in a troop or drove, and handed over to him.

The first warning of the approach of dawn is sounded by the clear note of the cock, the shrill scream of the ever-wakeful *tero-tero*, or South American lapwing, and the hoarse boom of the *nandu*, *aveztruz*, or ostrich, as he leads forth his young to their early meal of thistleheads and coarse pasturage. Every one promptly answers the

summons to be up and stirring. The not very elaborate toilet of the camp is quickly performed.

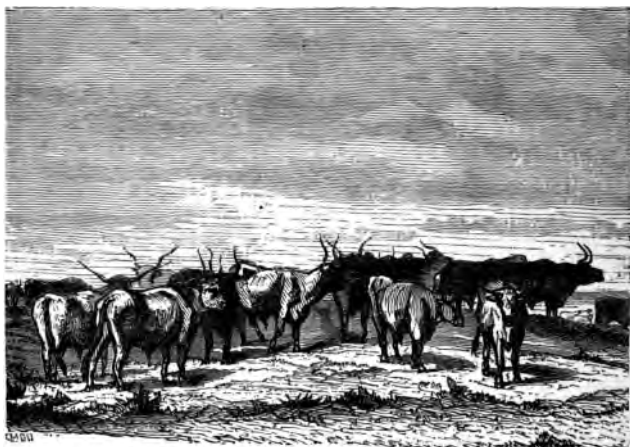
The dress usually worn in the camp consists of a pair of very wide cotton trousers, over which is worn a piece of gaudily-coloured cloth about four feet square, one end of which is fastened behind, and the other in front, by a broad silk sash. Round the waist is worn a broad belt, in which are various pockets, and which supports the indispensable knife. Add to this a light poncho, or cloak, thrown over the shoulders, a broad-brimmed felt hat, a pair of long boots reaching to the knee, on the heels of which are fastened a pair of spurs, with rowels of about five inches in diameter, and you can picture a camp-man prepared for his morning's work.

All now congregate round the kitchen-fire to wait for the first streak of day. Here one is engaged in roasting a bit of meat on an iron spit; another is deftly rolling up a supply of paper cigars; some are, by means of a tube, industriously sucking the fragrant juice of the yerba maté from the little gourd which serves for a teapot; while one and all are busily chatting, either in the soft and flowing idiom of old Castile, or in the guttural language of the Pampa Indian.

Soon, however, the capataz, or foreman, announces the approach of day in the east, and all are immediately engaged in saddling up.

This process is rather more complicated than the adjustment of the few light straps and girths necessary for holding on an English saddle. A thick rug or horse-

cloth is first placed on the back of the animal, over which is laid the caronna, which is a large square piece of dressed leather, or of raw hide, as the case may be ; then comes a heavy demi-peak saddle, which is secured by a broad girth, or cincha of raw hide ; over this is a thick, soft rug, called a pillon or cojinillo, covered by a small



ARGENTINE CATTLE.

piece of nicely-dressed hide, and secured by a surcingle, or sobrecincha : the whole is called a recado, and weighs about forty pounds. It is, in many respects, more clumsy and unmanageable than the English saddle ; but should night overtake two travellers in the camp, one the proud possessor of a neat English racing saddle, the

other contented with a common recado, the advantage of the latter over the former becomes very apparent. The man with the English saddle, after picketing his horse, selects a dry tuft of grass on which to sit, and, with his saddle on his head, and his head on his knees, dozes and shivers in wretchedness till dawn. Many a longing and covetous glance does he cast at his companion, who, having spread out his various traps on the ground, stretches himself comfortably on a soft bed, impervious to the dampness of the ground, and, with his head on his saddle and a thick horse-cloth around him, sleeps soundly and uninterrupted till morning.

To return, however, from this digression. The horses have been tied up all night; and, wearied by this unwonted restraint, one or two show a decided unwillingness to submit to be mounted. This, however, is mere matter of amusement to the swarthy savage, who lightly vaults into the saddle, and the air resounds with shouts and yells of encouragement or derision as the cruel spur is sunk, and, with nose to the ground and back arched, the buckjumper bounds off over the soft turf.

The horses soon settle to the work; the men scatter themselves along the boundaries of the Estancia, and, when a complete cordon has been formed of from six to seven miles in length, all begin to close in towards a common centre. From every quarter of the compass may be heard the loud yells and shrill Indian war-whoops of the men as they rouse the cattle from their lairs in the tall grass.

Away in the distance are seen long lines of cattle, coming at a steady, swinging gallop, while behind them are natives, dashing along on their active horses, waving their bright coloured ponchos, and shouting like excited maniacs. As the various lines converge, there may be seen troops of scared ostriches, small groups of roe-deer, confused and terrified, with, perhaps, a stray stag among the general mob.

All are at last surrounded on a certain spot of ground, always used for the same purpose, and called the *rodeo* (from *rodear*, "to surround"), the blown and foaming horses are let go, fresh ones caught and saddled, and the work of the day commences.

The tame working oxen are first parted off, and kept at a spot about five hundred yards off, to act as a sort of decoy to the wild ones. The *tropero* rides in among the cattle and points out those which he considers fat enough for the market. The selected *novillo*, or bullock, is taken by three men, who, one on each side and one behind, drive him at full gallop, confused and terrified by the frantic shouts and cracking of whips, up to where the tame oxen stand, where he is left, and they return for another. Sometimes, in spite of whip and shout, he suddenly stops, and when the horsemen have shot past, gallops back, thinking his escape accomplished.

Not so easily, however, are his dusky pursuers to be baffled.

One or two lassos are speedily uncoiled, the noose of tough green hide drops over the horns of the fugitive,



CATTLE-HUNT.



and the hardy little horse, though not half his weight, pulls him struggling, bellowing, and half-choked, up to the required spot. Here a second lasso is adroitly thrown, so that the bullock puts his hind legs into the noose, when it is immediately pulled tight, and he falls heavily to the ground. The first horseman now dismounts, removes his lasso from the horns, and when he has remounted, the lasso on the legs is slackened, the bullock gets up, steps out of the loop, and walks sulkily in among his doomed brethren.

Thus does the work of the day progress, the monotony being relieved by occasional accidents and casualties. Here comes a man dashing along with slackened rein and busy spur, when suddenly his horse comes down; not, indeed, after the manner of an English horse performing the same feat, but planting his forehead on the ground he turns a complete somersault like a practised acrobat. The rider, however, alights on his feet, runs clear of his horse's heels, and joining in the peals of laughter which his *contretemps* has elicited from his dusky companions, jumps on his erring steed, and is soon galloping along as recklessly as before.

Perhaps, too, the girth or cincha, to which the lasso is fastened, gives way, when the whole trappings are suddenly and rudely snatched from underneath the astonished rider, who falls prone to the earth. The lasso itself, when kept at its fullest tension by a horse at one end and a bullock at the other, suddenly parts in the middle, and the end comes back in the face of the rider

with such force as to leave an ineffaceable scar across his swarthy brow. These slight accidents only serve, however, to make the work of the day less monotonous, and afford food for gossip while sucking the never-failing maté or tea over the evening fire.

The required number of cattle having been parted off, they are all shut up in a large corral or yard for the night. A bullock is killed, and cut up in convenient pieces without removing the hide. Fires are lit, at which each man roasts his own allowance, generally about five or six pounds in weight. Kettles of hot water are prepared for maté, and the dusky Indians are happy. After supper, cigars, cards, and guitars are produced, and amid smoking, playing, and dancing, the evening quickly passes away, till one after another spreads out his saddle, and, rolling himself in his poncho, betakes himself to rest for the night. The fires are left in charge of the dogs, and silence reigns over all till the freshening cold which is felt shortly before dawn rouses all to a renewal of their labours.

Next morning the troop is driven to the boundaries of the Estancia, where they are counted over as they run past between two lines of men. The dealer pays down his money, and with the help of his hired peons or servants, marches for the saladero or slaughter-house in town. The price usually paid for fat three-year-old oxen, weighing from four to five hundred pounds, is about £1. 15s.; and for fat cows, about £1. 5s. In the saladeros from six to seven hundred cattle are killed

before ten A.M., the flesh of which is converted into charquè, better known as jerked beef, and the bones are steamed for the grease which they yield, and afterwards burnt for bone ash, which forms an important item in the exports of the country.



THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.

CHAPTER IV.

SHEEP SHEARING.

THE Estanciero having delivered all his fat cattle in town, he next turns his attention to the shearing of his sheep, this being his second and, generally speaking, his principal source of revenue. The ancient sheep of this district are curious, but hideous, and almost useless. They produce a crop of thin wool or hair of every variety of shade from white to black, have long legs, long tails, and long necks, surmounted by a head like that of a blood horse, and as regards horns they have been supplied by nature with more than her usual liberality, for it is not uncommon to see one of them with four, five, or even six horns. But these wretched things are fast giving place to a better kind.

At present there is no market whatever for the

carcasses of sheep, and the nominal price is about 2s. sterling.

The sheep on an Estancia are divided into flocks of from fifteen hundred to two thousand, and to each flock is appointed a shepherd. This shepherd usually receives about £2 per month, besides beef, and two pounds per week of yerba maté, or tea. He lives in a little rancho or hut, and is supplied by the establishment with five or six horses, an axe, a kettle, a pot, a roasting-spit, and a water-barrel. As to the amount of beef supplied, it is generally very liberal, in many places a bullock being divided between three shepherds every fourth or fifth day.

The family of a shepherd consists, generally speaking, of himself and his dusky mate, with perhaps two or three dark brown pledges of love. Yet though they are so few in number, there is very little beef left over at the end of the fifth day, and indeed the fourth is often passed in sad and solemn contemplation of the well-picked marrow bones, in hearty abuse of the stinginess of the patron, and in earnest longings for the morrow, when another bullock is to be slaughtered.

In most Estancias the shepherd is permitted to catch and tame some cows for his own use, and to till as much land as he thinks proper, and where he is not too lazy, or is assisted by a partner who does not spend the whole day in smoking and drinking maté, as is very often the case, he can have the milk of four or five cows every morning, while his garden supplies him with maize, sweet potatoes, melons, pumpkins, water-melons, toma-

toes, mandioca, and tobacco. In return for all this, he is expected to open the gates of his sheep-pen as soon as the dew is off the grass in the morning, and mounting his horse, drive his charge to pasture. He ought to remain with them nearly all day, returning to the house only at



SHEPHERD AND HORSE.

long intervals to light a cigar and enjoy half an hour over the never-failing maté. At sundown he shuts up his flock in the yard, catches a fresh horse, which he pickets out for use on the morrow, fetches a barrel of

water from the laguna, cuts some firewood, and then reclining before the fire, he strums on his guitar and smokes, while the kettle is being boiled and the beef hisses and sputters in the flames.

The season at which sheep-shearing usually takes place is about the beginning of November, which is the latter end of the South American spring. The seasons may be arranged more or less as follows :—Spring consists of September, October, and November ; summer of December, January, and February ; autumn of March, April, and May ; and winter of June, July, and August.

In the last month of spring, then, commences the wool harvest, and on a large Estancia containing thirty thousand or forty thousand sheep the place presents a most exciting scene. From sixty to eighty persons arrive from every quarter of the compass, and of all classes of society.

The scene of operations is a large open shed or galpòn, floored with pine boards, at one end of which are pens for enclosing the sheep. Ten or twelve men are engaged at five shillings per day to catch the sheep ; and the signal for work being given, they leap into those pens, seize a sheep, throw it on their shoulders, rush up the shed, and, throwing it down, bind its four legs together with a strip of sheepskin. All this is accompanied with the most frantic yells and whoops, without which they seem as incapable of violent exertion as a sailor is of hauling taut a brace or halyard without “singing out.”

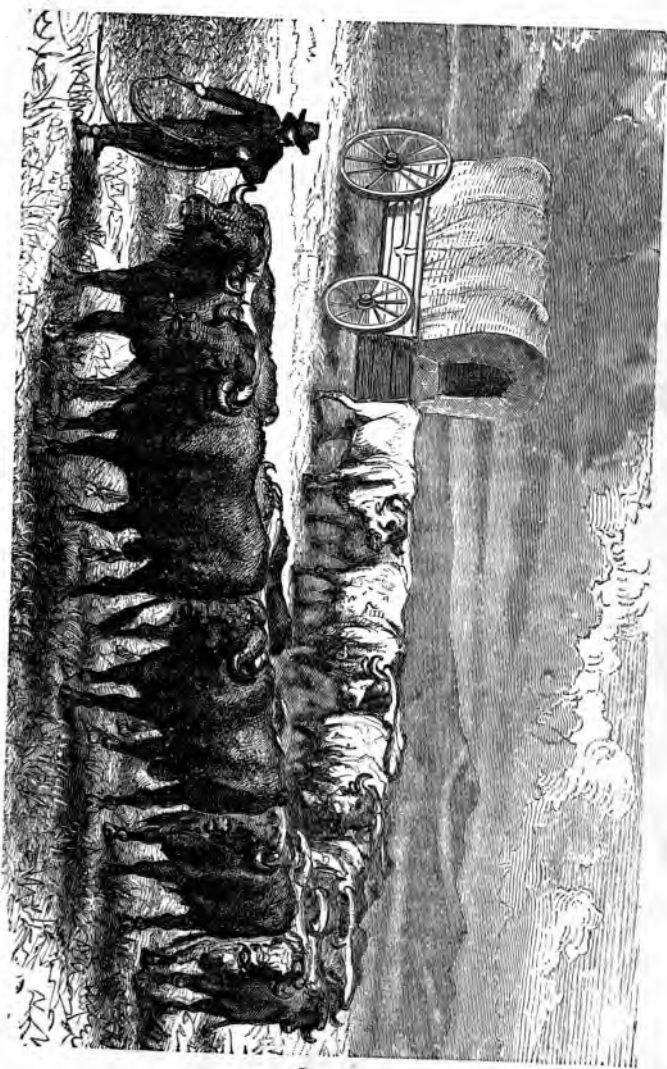
When the floor is covered, then enter thirty or forty shearers, and commence divesting the prisoners of their

woolly coverings. Amid the constant jabber of Guarani, Indian, and Spanish, the click of the shears, and the roars of laughter which the most commonplace remark elicits, sheep after sheep bounds off in shorn astonishment.

The work commences, generally speaking, at ten A.M., that is, as soon as the dew has dried off the wool; and between twelve and one the people stop for breakfast. During shearing time there is an extra cook hired, whose duty it is to convert the flesh of two bullocks per day into "asadosy puchero," or roast and boiled, for the use of the hands employed. At noon, then, this refreshment is served out to them in large "fuentes de lata," or tin basins; and after they have finished, some lie down in the shade to smoke, some to sleep, and some to gossip, till the hour of siesta has passed.

Where forty shearers are employed it is considered pretty good work to shear about three thousand sheep a day, thus making an average of a little less than eighty sheep per man. I have, however, seen a man clip double this number without taking more than three or four pieces of sheepskin along with the wool, and none of those pieces being more than two inches square. Such a case is, however, rare, for, generally speaking, the work is very roughly done, and the number of cuts on a shorn sheep is sufficient to make the President of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals give up his post in despair.

In the present state of sheep-farming in South America



БИЛОК-ВАГОН.



it is nearly impossible to check this rough mode of work entirely, though no doubt it might be slightly altered for the better. Were a man to insist on his sheep being clipped with all the care and nicety which is practised in England, he would lose all his workmen. All that the Estanciero can do is to watch as closely as his time will permit for any gross acts of carelessness on the part of the shearers, and when he discovers such a case, turn off the delinquent on the spot. For cases which are considered unavoidable, there are men employed who go about the galpón armed with a can of spirits of tar and a brush. These are called the "medicos," or doctors, and wherever they see a cut on a sheep, they apply the tar brush. As the object of the tar is merely to prevent the flies from settling on the wound, there are other substances often employed in lieu of it, such as paraffin, kerosene, or sometimes dry wood ashes.

In the evening, all the work being completed, one and all repair to the neighbouring lagunas and rivers, and after a refreshing plunge in the tepid water each comes out in his true colours. The man who is white by nature comes out of the lagoon looking white, while the more swarthy Indian, if he do not change his colour, feels at least several ounces lighter than when he jumped in with every pore of his skin filled with grease, tar, and dust.

After returning from the bath there is generally light enough to enjoy an hour on the race-course. Here small races of five hundred yards or more are run for two

or three dollars, and matches made for longer races and bigger stakes to be run on some future day. But notwithstanding all temptations to remain, the sun slowly retires from the scene, and all betake themselves to the fires which twinkle around the establishment. Here they partake of a slight refreshment, consisting of about five or six pounds of roast beef to each person, followed by a dessert of marrow scooped or sucked from its native bone. The remains of the repast having been generously handed over to some fifty or sixty snarling and wrangling curs, the *matè* is produced, and while sipping this beverage, amid jest and gossip, accompanied with the twanging of the guitar, the *paisanos* are supremely happy, ignorant as they are of worldly care or anxiety, and utterly indifferent as to what the morrow may bring forth.

Later on in the night may be heard around one or more of those fires the low though earnest whisperings of the gamblers, who, amid low though impassioned whisperings, decide the ownership of money, cattle, horses, harness, or even of personal raiment. Sometimes, however, the silence is broken by a loud and angry word, answered by a louder and more angry retort, and immediately followed by the click of steel on steel. The fight is generally over before any great attention is attracted to the spot, and at the morrow's muster there are two men who are not among the workers. One is dead, or *hors de combat*, while the other has prudently taken a trip across the Uruguay.

The great and joyful day at length arrives when the last

sheep is shorn, and the fact is announced by a chorus of shouts, yells, and war-whoops, that baffles all description further than saying that it must be highly dangerous to the tympanum of any European ear stationed within five hundred yards of the orchestra. The vales, or promissory notes, are handed in and cashed, the shears all delivered up, then horses are saddled, bullocks yoked, and joyfully does the patrón and his servants watch the mob move off, leaving the Estancia to its old routine of orderly quietness.

The wool is now sent into town in bullock carts, where it is sold or put on board a small vessel and sent to Buenos Ayres, as the case may be. It is sold by the arroba of twenty-five pounds, and a fair price for mixed wools in the town of Concordia may be called three Bolivian dollars, of which six and a quarter are valued at a sovereign, so that the price of the wool is about fourpence halfpenny per pound.

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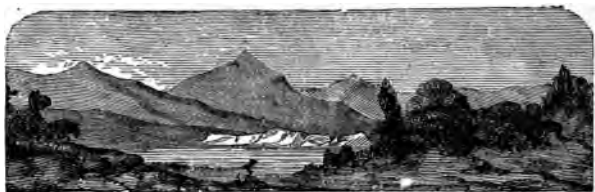
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TRISTAN D'ACUNHA.

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TRISTAN D'ACUNHA.

ABOUT fifty-five miles distant from Tristan d'Acunha, high up and above where we had been looking for it, we observed what appeared to be merely a white spot of cloud, but which in fact was the snow-covered summit of the great peak of Tristan d'Acunha (8,850 feet high), all the lower portion of the island being entirely lost in flat, light haze, that seemed to be nothing more than a portion of the sky. Very soon, however, the sloping sides of the island began to loom faintly through the curtain of mist, and shortly afterwards Inaccessible Island was also seen. By four P.M. the sharp ridges of the sides below the snow began to show out clearly, and the whole form of the island could be traced down to the water. The great mass continued to rise higher as we approached it, but without becoming more defined.

As the sun went down behind us, its light changed the snow to a bright pink colour, the sides of the mountain

lower down assuming a sombre red tinge. As the sun sank below the western horizon, the red light gradually disappeared from the lower part of the mountain, and lingered at last for a moment in one bright red spot on the snow on the summit, and then the whole faded into cold grey. Some clouds came up about sunset, and we feared that we had lost our only fine day, and with it the only opportunity for landing in the morning; but later on in the evening the young moon over us looked bright and clear, the breeze, which had begun to ruffle the water ominously as the sun went down, fell light again, the stars shone out, and all promised well for our being able to communicate with the settlement in the morning. By seven o'clock we were close to the island, and the ship was hove to for the night with her head off shore on the north-west side of the island, distant six miles.

We looked at our "Directory," and found the island's history.

There are three islands in the group, of which Tristan d'Acunha is the largest, named after the Portuguese navigator who discovered the group in 1506.

At present it is the domain of an interesting English people, whose manners, simplicity, and excellence of character remind us strongly of the somewhat similarly placed family upon Pitcairn Island in the Pacific, the retreat of the mutineers of the *Bounty*. As we are able to trace, from successive visitors, the progress of these isolated people, we give such extracts here as may cause the



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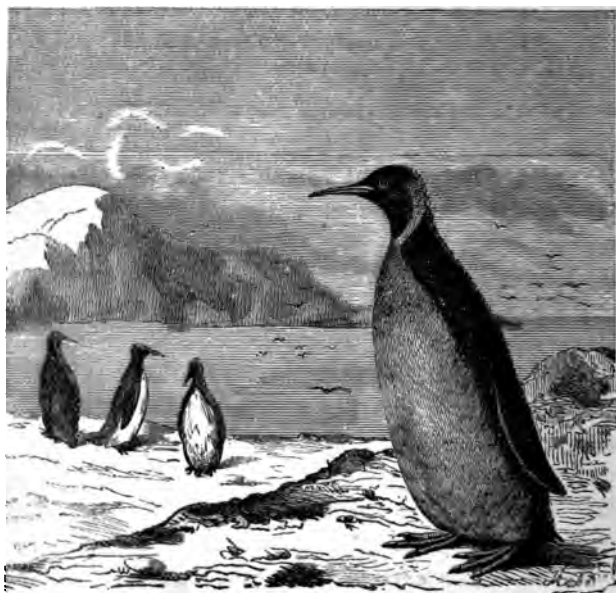
passing mariner to view with great interest these children of nature.

The British Embassy for China touched here in 1792. Having previously examined the shore, and taken soundings in boats, the *Lion* stood in, and anchored in the evening, on the north side, in thirty fathoms of water. When the ship was at anchor, she was overshadowed by the dark mass of that portion of the island, whose sides seem to rise like a moss-grown wall immediately from the ocean.

The rocks yielded great quantities of sea-weed called laver, and the shore was covered with a broad sea-weed, several fathoms long. They found a quantity of goats, left there by former navigators, which were very wild; they shot seven of them. Of birds, the principal were a kind of gannet, like wild geese, which the sailors considered as excellent food; penguins, Cape cocks and hens, albatrosses, and a bird like a partridge, but of a black colour, which cannot fly, is easily run down, and is very well flavoured. They found abundance of fish, particularly a kind of large perch, some weighing six pounds; file-fish in large schools, crawfish, star-fish, and others.

The shore was covered with seals, sea-lions, and sea-elephants (the tongues of which were reckoned good eating), and whales in the offing, particularly *killers*—most of them, however, being cow fish, or females. In the seven months he obtained five thousand six hundred seal-skins, and could have loaded a large ship with oil in three weeks.

In July, 1821, the *Blenden Hall*, Captain Greig, from London to Bombay, was totally wrecked on Inaccessible Island. The commander, officers, and passengers got safe on shore, but eight of the crew perished. They



PENGUIN.

remained on the island, exposed to cold and rain, until the 8th of November, on which day the carpenter and four of the crew embarked in a small punt, made out of the wreck with surgical instruments which were thrown ashore,

and reached Tristan d'Acunha, where they procured two whale-boats, and brought away those that remained on Inaccessible Island.

During the time they were on the island they had no food



SEA-ELEPHANT.

but penguins and their eggs. Out of some bales of cloth washed on shore they made tents: an iron buoy sawed in two was their only cooking utensil. They were four days exposed to heavy rains and intense cold before they could

procure fire. The ladies and passengers suffered severely, nothing being saved but the clothes they wore, the ship going to pieces two hours after she struck.

Soon after daylight on Monday morning, the 5th of August, we found ourselves about two miles and a half from the island. The whole of the peak and the upper portion of high precipitous rocks below the table-land, from which the peak rises, were entirely obscured by a long dark mass of cloud, extending in a distinctly marked line from one extreme to the other, below which the little settlement, with its few scattered cottages, was distinctly visible in the grey morning light. For some little time we could not detect any movement amongst the people on shore, but at length we observed a red flag hoisted on the largest cottage. Soon after seven o'clock, a boat containing eight men, but pulling only four oars, was descried coming out of a bay near the settlement. The boat was steered by a venerable looking old man, with a long white beard.

As they neared the ship, we noticed that the boat contained a welcome supply of fresh provisions, in the shape of potatoes, poultry, fish, eggs, and a couple of lively young pigs. They were soon alongside, and most of them came on deck, when we found that the old man was Peter Green, the oldest surviving colonist. The men all wore merely shirts and trousers, the former being, however, good woollen ones, such as are usually called Chobhams or Baltics; warm stockings knit by themselves from the wool of their own sheep, and hide moccasins for

shoes. The old man, who acted as spokesman, modestly said, that he was in no respect superior to the others, and that they were all equal. About nine A.M. we started from the ship, taking Green as pilot. The ship at this time was not more than a mile and a quarter from the shore; the swell was so great that occasionally, as the boat went down into the trough of the sea, the ship would be entirely hidden from view.

When about a quarter of a mile from the landing-place we entered a belt of sea-weed, which grows up from a depth of fifteen fathoms. This acts as a natural break-water, lowering the height of the waves, preventing them from "breaking," and giving an undulating, glassy appearance to the surface of the water. The long, flat leaves floating at the top considerably impeded the progress of the boat through them, as the men had constantly to draw in or dip their oars to clear them. As soon as the weed was passed, a short space of clear water extended up to the beach. At the landing-place—a beach of fine black sand—there was a ship's long boat, hauled up high and dry, which had belonged to a vessel that had foundered at sea, a hundred miles off. The crew, seventeen in number, landed in it here, and after remaining fifteen days were fortunate enough to get a passage to the Cape in a brig.

We proceeded at once up to the settlement, which consisted of some eleven houses scattered over a sloping open space of ground at the north-western side of the island. They had all small portions of land, enclosed by

walls of loose stones about four feet high, attached to them as gardens, but which at this season of the year (their early spring) had very little growing in them. In one we observed some marigolds in flower, and a number of dwarf strawberry plants, others were overgrown with tufts of coarse tussock grass.

The houses were well and strongly built of the soft stone of the island, neatly cut into blocks of all sizes and shapes, which were fitted to each other very neatly like the pieces of a Chinese puzzle, mortar apparently not being used in their construction. The roofs were thatched with long grass: thatch made of this grass will last for thirty years, and outwear the wood. The timber they had obtained at a great expense from American whaling ships, the trees growing on the island not being sufficiently large for the purpose. Many of their trees, by the way, have been destroyed by a worm or species of blight. The walls are about eighteen inches thick. It was evidently necessary to build them solidly in order that they might resist the strong gales which frequently visit the island. Two houses had been blown down in a strong westerly gale last year.

Meanwhile some of the men were employed in collecting their cattle from the pasturage grounds situated a few miles on the other side of the low land below the settlement. Two bullocks were shot down and were afterwards cut up and sent on board for the use of the ship's company. Tristan d'Acunha being too small to maintain more than a limited number, they seem to



NATIVE RECEPTION.

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consider the Cape as the natural destination of their surplus population, and although distant about fifteen hundred miles, they speak and think of it as if it were close at hand. Forty-five of them, together with Mr. Taylor, who had fulfilled his term of five years as resident clergyman, had recently gone there. About the same time five families went to the United States. Before this exodus their numbers had risen to a hundred and twelve; there are now fifty-three in all.

Some of the young men are fine, handsome fellows, with only just a perceptible mulatto shade combined with a healthy red tinge on the cheeks. Of the women, two were black, several olive (some with woolly, others with straight black hair), and a few had no black blood in their veins at all. We took a stroll to the grave-yard, which was situated between the houses and the sea. It was a square piece of ground, half an acre in extent, and enclosed with a stone wall four feet high. It appeared to contain about twenty graves, two of which had headstones attached to them.

We ascertained that there were about five hundred head of cattle on the island, and two-hundred sheep, belonging to the different families, all of which were distinguished by their owner's mark. Some short time ago, by way of improving the breed, they had procured two fine English sheep from a merchant vessel, but these, unfortunately, turned out to be infected with scab, and contaminated the whole stock, half of which perished. We found, on inquiry, that they kill cattle or sheep in turns, and distribute the

meat amongst the different families, taking payment either in kind, or money, or barter of some description. They only grow wheat enough to serve for seed, preferring to buy flour from the American whalers. The birds described by previous navigators as partridges without wings, are called woodcocks by the islanders. From the description given of them, the beak seems to be much shorter than that of the woodcock, and not half the length of that of the New Zealand apteryx.

They kill the sea-elephants only when they require oil for their own use, chiefly in the manufacture of soap, which they prepare themselves. If they knew the price of it in the markets, and could calculate upon ships calling in for regular supplies, they are ready to procure it in any quantity. Whales come close in, but they do not attempt to kill them, and, indeed, have not the means of doing so. The bull elephants (twenty feet long) furnish from eight to ten barrels of oil, the cows about six. There are few seals on the island now, but they abound on the neighbouring island, where they have been undisturbed for twenty years. The albatross breeds on the high tableland below the peak, amongst the snow, which is melted for a considerable space round the nest by the heat of the bird's body. The wild goats—spoken of by all preceding navigators—have entirely disappeared, in a most extraordinary and unaccountable manner, within the last two or three years. As recently as that, the people used to fall in with them in flocks of five hundred together, but, strange to say, they can neither meet with any now living,

or discover the remains of dead ones. They cannot even conjecture what has become of them.

At half-past three we were ready for our start, and took our farewell of these interesting people. As we steamed away they stood up in their boat and gave us three lusty cheers.



FIJI.



FIJI.

THE Fiji Islands are a group numbering two hundred and eleven, spreading over about forty thousand square miles of the Pacific Ocean, and situated about a thousand miles from New Zealand.

Many of them are surrounded by "the white reef" that encircles their inner lakelets, and shuts them from the surf and sound of sea.

Some of the islands are very small and flat; others raise their peaked summits to the height of four or five thousand feet, and the two largest are from three to four hundred miles in circumference. They are beautiful of aspect, and rich in productive soil. They are covered with a luxurious growth of tropical plants and trees, from lowest coral reef to highest peak, save where the hand of native cultivation has cleared away large tracts of wood by fire, in order to prepare planting-ground for yams, bananas, and taro. Where this has been done one

must rise to the level of a thousand feet before reaching masses of forest growth.



FIJIAN.

After passing these, and nearing the summit of the

hills, trees are found to be sparsely scattered ; but ferns of many kinds, with orchids and mosses, abound. Lower



FIJIAN.

down, and following the course of the pleasant and fer-

tilising rivulets, is an interlacing undergrowth of bushes and climbing plants. The mangrove seeks low and swampy places near the sea, pushes its way along muddy creeks, creeps over tracts of coral reef, and flourishes even where its young offshoots are covered three or four feet, at high tide, with salt water.

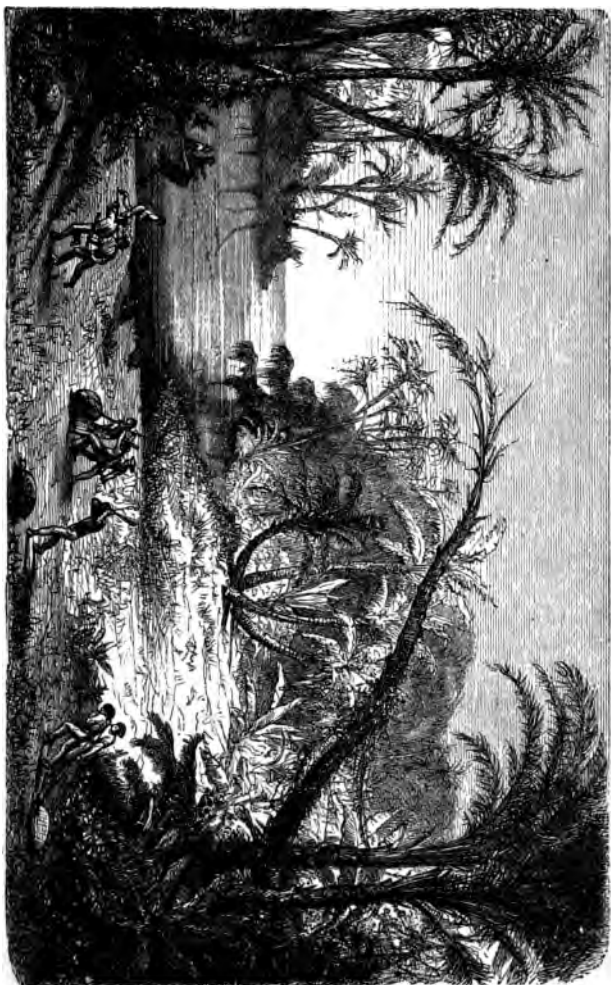
Nature is here prodigal of her varied tints and forms.

So favourable to vegetable life are the climate and soil of these islands, that turnip, radish, and mustard seed, planted by Mr. Brackenridge (an American horticulturist who accompanied the United States exploring expedition), showed their first leaves in twenty-four hours; melons, cucumbers, and pumpkins sprang up in three days; beans and peas in four. In four weeks from the time of planting, radishes and lettuces were fit for use, and in five weeks marrow-fat peas.

There is a difference here, as in all the large Polynesian islands, between the two sides of the islands. On the weather side showers are frequent, and vegetation knows no check; to leeward droughts are common, and the sultry sun sets his scorching mark upon the land.

A small traffic with European ships was begun in the year 1806, sandal-wood being then the chief article of barter. That supply has ceased; but the Fijians now trade with America, England, and Hamburg, the principal exports being cocoa-nut oil, tortoise-shell, and bêche-de-mer.

Of all tropical trees the cocoa-nut seems to meet the



TURTLE-HUNT.

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largest number of demands from those who live among its groves; and to exaggerate its value is scarcely possible. Food, and light, and clothing; drinking-cups, cordage, fishing-tackle, carpeting; wood for building, and oil for lubrication—are all supplied by this ever-ready friend. Home consumption being great, cocoa-nut oil is not likely to be chiefly exported; yet hundreds of tons are exported.

The search for tortoise-shell gives occupation to many of the natives, and some of the small uninhabited islands are visited, at certain seasons, for this express purpose. From December to March, fishermen remain in the haunts of the turtle, and intercept the slow travellers as they return from feeding or from laying their eggs.

Sometimes they are caught in nets of strong cocoa-nut sinnet, with meshes of seven or eight inches square; but, after they become entangled, the difficulty of actual capture remains.

The Fijians will dive and seize the turtle, overcoming him in his own element, not without a severe struggle. Should the resistance offered be unusually vigorous, his captor tries to insert his finger and thumb in the creature's eye-socket, and this done, the turtle owns himself vanquished by rising to the surface. He is then dragged to the boat and laid on his back. Four or five men will sometimes be engaged in securing one such prize.

Live turtle are kept in pens, by the chiefs, ready for sale. The thirteen plates that cover the back and sides

of the turtle (the tortoise-shell of commerce) are called "a head," and weigh from one to seven pounds.

Walking along the shore or near the reefs, one often sees, through clear and shallow water, numbers of sea-slugs, some black, and some brown, others of a dark yellow colour. These are different species of *holothuria*, sought after by the natives, not so much for home as for foreign consumption. Tens of thousands are taken every



NATIVE POTTERY.

year, drained, and split, and boiled and dried, till they become as hard as chips; and then sent to China to be softened, and swallowed in the rich soup of mandarin gourmands. Traders make an agreement with some willing chief, paying him so much a hogshead for the *bêche-de-mer*, just as they are taken on the reef. The chief sets his dependants to find them, and to prepare

suitable houses for the curing process, which keeps many hands employed for many days.

The Fijians are resorted to by the Tongans and other neighbours for articles of manufacture, pottery especially, wherein their excellence is confessed.

The Fijian native is a finely-made man, muscular and energetic.

His house is carefully constructed, often thirty feet in height, and from sixty to ninety feet in length, strong in posts and rafters; its walls made of reeds neatly arranged, and adorned with coloured sinnet-work; its thatch of long grass, or leaves of the sugar-cane and stone-palm; with a fire-place sunk a foot below the floor, and guarded by a kerb of hard wood; a dais serving as a divan and sleeping-place, and a shelf for the owner's property. Many houses, thus large and handsome, with others of inferior form and size, are grouped into villages, intersected by narrow lanes, and protected by reed fences.

The Fijian canoe is built on so good a model that the Tongans have adopted it in place of their own old-fashioned *Togiaki*. The spears and clubs of Fiji display much skill in carving, and speak well for the habit of patient continuance in tedious labour. They are, also, accomplished cooks, availing themselves of many methods; they bake, boil, roast, and fry their food. They have twelve kinds of bread, nearly thirty kinds of puddings, and many sorts of broths and soups, including turtle-soup.

The true Fijian moral life is very low. One of the first lessons taught to the infant is to strike its mother; and neglect of this would beget a fear that the child would grow up a coward. Mothers teach their little children to kick and tread upon the dead bodies of their enemies. Until very recently children taken in war were tied to the stem of a tree, and formed a mark for the spears and



STONE HOUSE.

arrows of the young boys, while grown people looked on and enjoyed the cruel sport.

Sick persons, if they do not show signs of recovery in two or three days, are either left to perish, or are buried alive by their friends. A reliable authority relates that a poor girl lying in a weakly state, had her curiosity aroused by an unusual noise outside her house. She

made shift to crawl to the door and look out, when she was instantly seized and thrown into her ready-made grave.' She shrieked, "Do not bury me; I am quite well now!"—but two men stood upon her body, while others threw earth into the hole, and pressed it down till she ceased to move.



CANOE.

The sick will sometimes consent to their own premature interment.

The following story is told by an English sailor, who lived for some years among the natives:—"I walked into a *Mbure*, and saw a tall young man about twenty years old. He appeared to be somewhat ailing, but not at all emaciated. He was rolling up the mat he had been

sleeping upon, evidently preparing to go away somewhere.

"I asked him where he was going, when he immediately answered that he was going to be buried. I said, 'You are not dead yet,' when he said he should soon be dead when he was put under ground. I asked him why he was going to be buried. He said it was three days since he had eaten anything, and, consequently, he was getting very thin, and that, if he lived any longer, he would be much thinner, and then the women would call him a *lila* (skeleton), and laugh at him. . . . By this time all his relations had collected round his door; his father had a wooden spade to dig the grave, his mother a new suit of *tapa*, his sister some vermillion and a whale's tooth. He rose, took up his bed and walked, his friends accompanying him. . . .

"When the grave was ready, he said, 'Before I die, I should like a drink of water.' His father said, as he ran to fetch it in a leaf doubled up, 'You have been a considerable trouble during your life, and it appears that you are going to trouble us equally at death.'

"The father returned with the water, which the son drank off, and then looked up into a tree covered with tough vines, saying he should prefer being strangled with a vine to being smothered in the grave. His father became excessively angry, and spreading the mat at the bottom of the grave, told his son to be a man, when he stepped into the grave, which was not more than six feet deep, and lay down on his back with the whale's tooth in

his hands, which were clasped across his body. The spare sides of the mat were then lapped over him, so as to prevent the earth from getting to his body, and then about a foot of earth was shovelled upon him as quickly as possible. His father immediately stamped it down solid, and called out, in a loud voice, 'Sa tiko, sa tiko,' ('You are stopping there'), meaning 'Good-bye, good-bye.' The son answered with an audible groan, and then about two feet more earth was shovelled in by the father, and stamped as before, and 'Sa tiko' called out again, which was answered by another groan, but much fainter. The grave was then completely filled up, when, for curiosity's sake, I said, 'Sa tiko,' but no answer was given, though I fancied I saw, or really did see, the earth crack a little on the top of the grave.

"The father and mother then turned back to back on the middle of the grave, and having dropped some kind of leaves from their hands, walked away in opposite directions, towards a running stream of water hard by, where they, and all the rest, washed themselves, and then we returned to the town, where a feast was prepared. As soon as the feast was over, it being then dark, began the dance and uproar which are always carried on either at natural or violent deaths."

Not long ago old people were constantly got rid of in a similar manner. At one of the islands, Commodore Wilkes, not seeing any man more than fifty years of age, asked where the old people were, and was told "that they were all buried." Parricide is a social institution.

The use of the rope, instead of the club, is regarded as the strongest mark of love. Widows are strangled at the death of their husbands; remonstrance being earnestly deprecated, and seldom found to avail anything.

Sometimes when a king's house or other important



SAVU FALLS.

building is to be erected, living men are placed in the deep holes dug for the insertion of the principal posts, and so buried. The notion is, that while they remain in a sitting posture, with their arms encircling the posts, the house stands safely. Being asked how men can hold

up the posts after death, the answer was, that if they make the sacrifice, and hold as long as possible, the gods will take care afterwards.

Captives taken in war have been placed between banana-trees and used as rollers at the launching of a chief's canoes. The English sailor, quoted before, asserts that he once saw forty men so treated, and that, at the distance of half a mile, he heard the cries of the wretched sufferers as the crushing weight passed over them.

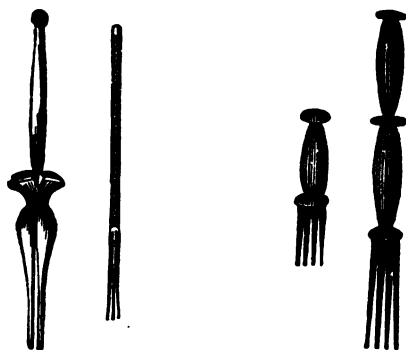
A case is named by Mr. Williams, where a young man and his father-in-law sat down to a repast, a cooked guana apiece being provided. In passing his father's portion to him, the young man broke off its tail. For this insult he paid with his life.

But the worst stage in Fijian degradation is their strange appetite for human flesh.

Revenge, and a false notion of what is bold and manly, may account in part for their cannibalism; but those who know them best, own that those motives are insufficient to account for all the facts that have come to their knowledge. The Fijians not only eat their enemies, but actually kidnap unoffending men for the express purpose of eating them. Sex or age makes little difference. Grey-headed men, women, and little children have been alike sent to the oven.

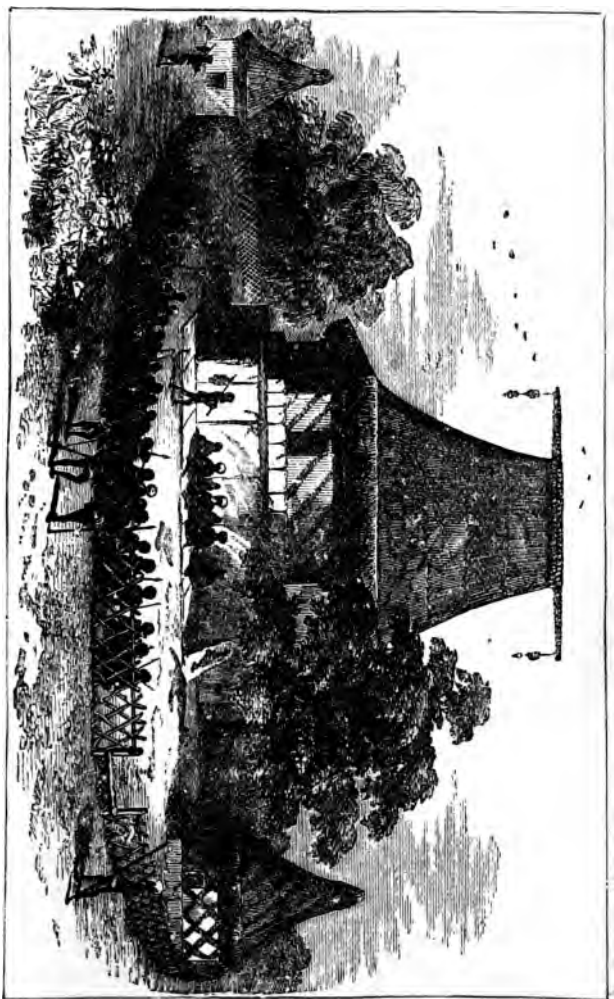
Human flesh is not eaten in an undressed state, nor is it usually prepared with other food. The ovens and pots in which it is cooked, and the dishes and forks used

in eating it are *tabu*, *i.e.* forbidden for any other purpose. Sometimes, though rarely, the body is cooked whole. When this is designed, it is placed in a sitting posture, adorned with a wig and black powder, and paraded through the streets as if still alive, before being carried to the oven. More frequently, the body is dismembered, and the separate pieces are folded in leaves for baking.



CANNIBAL FORKS.

The chief Tuikilakila found, among a large number of slain enemies, the body of his cousin, against whom he had a grudge. After gazing with savage delight on the corpse, he gave orders that it should be reserved for his own eating, none sharing it with him ; and so it was—being lightly baked at first, and preserved by repeated cooking.



TEMPLE AND RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL.

The following story may be relied upon :—"Na Ruwai killed his only wife and eat her. She accompanied him to plant *taro*, and when the work was done he sent her to fetch wood, with which he made a fire, while she, at his bidding, collected leaves and grass to line the oven, and procured a bamboo to cut up what was to be cooked.

"When she had cheerfully obeyed his commands, the monster seized his wife, deliberately dismembered her, and cooked and eat her, calling some to aid him in consuming the unnatural feast. The woman was his equal, one with whom he lived comfortably ; he had no quarrel with her, nor cause of complaint. Twice he might have defended his conduct to me " (the Rev. Thomas Williams) "had he been so disposed, but he only assented to the truth of what I here record. The only motive could have been a fondness for human flesh, and a hope that he should be pointed out as a terrific fellow."

One Fijian chief possesses, even there, an unenviable cannibal notoriety. A row of stones, seen by the Rev. Richard Lyth, forms the register of the number of bodies eaten by Ra Undrenadre. Of these stones eight hundred and seventy-two are standing.

Not content with slaying and devouring their enemies, the Fijians are adepts in torturing them. They will cut off parts of the doomed man while yet living ; cook and eat them before his eyes ; and, adding the bitterest insult to the grossest injury, even offer him a portion of his own cooked flesh !

Though much changed and still changing, the Fijian social state is very remote from that in which Lesbia weeps over her dead sparrow, or the Animal Protection Society prosecutes a man for handling too roughly his own self-willed ass !

TRINIDAD.





TRINIDAD.

CHAPTER I.

THE PITCH LAKE.

NOW for a visit to the famous Lake of Pitch, which our old nursery literature described as one of the "Wonders of the World."

As you near the landing-place for the lake, you perceive that the beach is black with pitch; and if the breeze is off the land, the asphalt smell (not unpleasant) comes off to welcome you. You row in; and see, probably, in front of the little row of wooden houses, a tall mulatto, in blue policeman's dress, gesticulating and shouting to you. He is the ward-policeman; and you will find him (as you will all these coloured police) able and courteous, shrewd and trusty.

These police are excellent specimens of what can be made of the Negro, if he be but first drilled, and then given

a responsibility which calls out his self-respect. He is now warning your crew not to run aground on one or other of the pitch reefs, which here take the place of rocks. A large reef, a hundred yards off on your left, has been almost all dug away, and carried to New York or to Paris to make asphalt pavement.

The boat is run ashore, under his directions, on a spit of sand between the pitch ; and when she ceases bumping up and down in the muddy surf, you scramble out upon a land exactly the hue of its inhabitants—of every shade, from jet black to bright brown. The pebbles on the shore are pitch.

In one of the many tide-pools close by, enclosed by pitch, a "four-eyes" is swimming about, staring up at you ; and when you hunt him, tries to escape, not by diving, but by jumping on shore on the pitch, and scrambling off between your legs.

And now, the policeman, after profoundest courtesies, is gone to get a mule-cart to take you up to the lake, and planks to bridge its water-channels.

The mule-cart when here, you are put into, on a chair, and slowly bumped and rattled past the corner of Dundonald Street—so named after the old sea-hero, who was, in his lifetime, full of projects for utilising this same pitch—and up a pitch road, with a pitch gutter on each side. The pitch in the road has been, most of it, laid down by hand, and is slowly working down the slight incline, leaving pools and ruts full of water, often invisible, because covered with a film of brown pitch-dust, and so letting in

the unwary walker over his shoes. The pitch in the gutter-bank is in its native place ; and as it spues slowly out of the soil into the ditch in odd wreaths and lumps, you may watch, in little, the process which has produced the whole deposit—probably the whole lake itself.

A bullock-cart, laden with pitch, comes jolting down past you ; and you observe that the lumps, when the fracture is fresh, have all a drawn-out look ; that the very air-bubbles in them (which are often very numerous) are all drawn out likewise, long and oval like the air-bubbles in some ductile lavas.

On your left, as you go on, the bush is low, full of yellow cassia and white hibiscus, and tangled with lovely convolvulus-like creepers, *Ipomœa* and *Echites*, with white, purple, or yellow flowers. On the right are Negro huts and gardens, fewer and fewer as you go on—all rich with fruit-trees, especially with oranges, hung with fruit of every hue, and beneath them, of course, the pine-apples of La Brea.

As you go onward up the gentle slope the ground becomes more and more full of pitch, and the vegetation poorer and more rushy, till it resembles, on the whole, that of an English fen.

At length you surmount the last rise, and before you lies the famous lake—not at the bottom of a depression, as you would have expected, but at the top of a rise, whence the ground slopes away from it on two sides, and rises from it very slightly on the two others. The black pool glares and glitters in the sun. Three or four

islands, some twenty yards wide, are scattered about the middle of it. Beyond it rises a noble forest of Moriche fan-palms; and to the right of them high wood, with giant mombins and undergrowth of cocorite—a paradise on the other side of the Stygian pool.

You walk, with some misgivings, on to the asphalt, and find it perfectly hard. In a few yards you are stopped by a channel of clear water, with tiny fish and water-beetles in it; and looking round, see that the whole lake is intersected with channels, so unlike anything which can be seen elsewhere, that it is not easy to describe them.

Conceive a crowd of mushrooms, of all shapes, from ten to fifty feet across, close together side by side, their tops being kept at exactly the same level, their rounded rims squeezed tight against each other; then conceive water poured on them so as to fill the parting seams, and (as in the wet season of Trinidad) to overflow the tops somewhat. Thus would each mushroom represent tolerably well one of the flat asphalt bosses, which seem to have sprung up each from a separate centre, while the parting seams would be of much the same shape as those in the asphalt, broad and shallow at the top, and rolling downward in a smooth curve, till they are at the bottom mere cracks, from two to ten feet deep. As far as the eye goes down, they are two, though pressed close to each other.

You push on across water-courses, over the planks which the Negroes lay down from island to island:

unless you prefer a steeple-chase with water-jumps, after the fashion of certain midshipmen, on a certain second visit to the lake. How the Negroes grinned delight and surprise at the vagaries of English lads—a species of animal altogether new to them! And how they grinned still more when certain staid and portly dignitaries caught the infection, and proved, by more than one good leap, that they too had been English school-boys—alas! long, long ago!

So, whether by bridging, leaping, or wading, you arrive at last at the little islands. Passing these, you come to that part of the lake where the asphalt is still oozing up.

If the wind sets toward you, you soon become aware of an evil smell of petroleum and sulphuretted hydrogen at once, which will probably give you a headache. The pitch here becomes yellow and white with sulphur foam; so do the water-channels; and out of both water and pitch innumerable bubbles of gas arise, loathly to the smell. You become also aware that the pitch is soft under you. You leave the impression of your boots; and if you stand still, you would soon be ankle deep. No doubt there are spots where, if you stood long enough, you would be slowly and horribly engulfed.

Stranger still will it seem to you, when you at last do what the Negroes ask you, and dip your hands into the liquid pitch, to find that it does not soil your fingers. The old proverb, that one cannot touch pitch without being defiled, happily does not stand true here,

or the place would be intolerably loathsome. But you can scrape it up, mould it into any shape you will, wind a string of it (as one of the midshipmen did) round your stick, and carry it off; but nothing is left on your hand save clean grey mud and water. You may knead it for an hour before you will have driven the mud out of it enough to make it sticky.

In five minutes you will have seen, handled, and (I trust) smelt enough to satisfy you with this very odd and very nasty vagary of tropic nature; and unless you wish to become faint and ill, between the sulphuretted hydrogen and the blaze of the sun reflected off the hot black pitch, you will hurry on over the water furrows and through the sedge beds to the further shore, to find yourself in a single step out of an Inferno into a Paradiso.

Sixty feet and more aloft, the straight smooth columns of the Moriches tower around us, till, as we look through the "pillared shade," the eye is lost in the green abysses of the forest. Overhead, their great fan-leaves form a groined roof, compared with which that of St. Mary Redcliff, or even of King's College, is as clumsy as all man's works are beside the works of God; and beyond the Moriche wood, the ostrich plumes of the cocorites, packed close round the madder-brown stems of the mombins, form a wall to our temple, which bears such tracery, carving, painting, as would have stricken dumb with awe and delight him who ornamented the Loggie of the Vatican. True, all is still-life here; no human form,



FOREST WITH ORCHIDS.



hardly even that of a bird, is mixed with the vegetable arabesques. A higher state of civilisation, ages after we are dead, may introduce them, and complete the scene by peopling it with a race worthy of it.



THE ANT-BEAR.

The Creator, at least, has done his part towards producing perfect beauty, all the more beautiful from its contrast with the ugliness outside. For the want of human beings fit for all that beauty man is alone to

blame; and when you see approach you, as the only priest of such a temple, the wild brown man, who feeds his hogs on Moriche fruit and mombin plums, and whose only object is to sell you an ant-eater's skin, you think to yourself—if you know the sad history of the West Indies—What might this place have become, during the three hundred and fifty years which have elapsed since Columbus first sailed round it, had men—calling themselves Christian, calling themselves civilised—possessed any tincture of real Christianity, of real civilisation! What has happened is but too well known. In July, 1498, Columbus, coming hither, fancied (and not so wrongly) that he had come to the “base of the earthly paradise.” He saw a land “the most beautiful in the world, and very prosperous.” Trinidad seemed to him like Valencia in his own Spain in the month of March. He saw along this very southern coast, now all wild woods, “cultivated lands, and people all of good stature, well made, and of very graceful bearing, with much and smooth hair, and wearing on their heads beautiful worked handkerchiefs, which looked in the distance as if they were of silk.”

What might not have been made, with something of justice and mercy, common sense and humanity, of these gentle Tamanacs and Guaraons! What was made of them, almost ere Columbus was dead, may be judged from the next story, taken from Las Casas.



TRINIDAD.

CHAPTER II.

THE GUARAON INDIANS.

THERE was a certain man named Juan Bono, who was employed by the members of the *audiencia* of St. Domingo to go and obtain Indians. He and his men, to the number of fifty or sixty, landed on the island of Trinidad. Now, the Indians of Trinidad were a mild, loving, credulous race, the enemies of the Caribs, who ate human flesh.

On Juan Bono's landing, the Indians, armed with bows and arrows, went to meet the Spaniards, and to ask them who they were, and what they wanted. Juan Bono replied, that his crew were good and peaceful people, who had come to live with the Indians; upon which, as the commencement of good-fellowship, the natives offered to build houses for the Spaniards. The Spanish

captain expressed a wish to have one large house built.

The accommodating Indians set about building it. It was to be in the form of a bell, and to be large enough for a hundred persons to live in. On any great occasion it would hold many more. Every day, while this house was being built, the Spaniards were fed with fish, bread, and fruit, by their good-natured hosts. Juan Bono was very anxious to see the roof on, and the Indians continued to work at the building with alacrity.

At last it was completed, being two stories high, and so constructed that those within could not see those without. Upon a certain day, Juan Bono collected the Indians together—men, women, and children—in the building, “to see,” as he told them, “what was to be done.”

Whether they thought they were coming to some festival, or that they were to do something more for the great house, does not appear. However, there they all were, four hundred of them, looking with much delight at their own handiwork. Meanwhile, Juan Bono brought his men round the building, with drawn swords in their hands; then, having thoroughly entrapped his Indian friends, he entered with a party of armed men, and bade the Indians keep still, or he would kill them. They did not listen to him, but rushed to the door. A horrible massacre ensued. Some of the Indians forced their way out, but many of them, stupefied at what they saw, and losing heart, were captured and bound. A hundred,

however, escaped, and snatching up their arms, assembled in one of their own houses, and prepared to defend themselves. Juan Bono summoned them to surrender: they would not hear of it; and then, as Las Casas says, "he resolved to pay them completely for the hospitality and kind treatment he had received," and so, setting fire to the house, the whole hundred men, together with some women and children, were burnt alive.

The Spanish captain and his men retired to the ships with their captives; and his vessel happening to touch at Porto Rico, when the Jeronimite Fathers were there, gave occasion to Las Casas to complain of this proceeding to the Fathers, who, however, did nothing in the way of remedy or punishment.

The reader will be surprised to hear the Clerigo's authority for this deplorable narrative. It is Juan Bono himself. "From his own mouth I heard that which I write." Juan Bono acknowledged that never in his life had he met with the kindness of father or mother but in the island of Trinidad. "Well, then, man of perdition, why did you reward them with such ungrateful wickedness and cruelty?" "On my faith, padre, because they" (he meant the auditors) "gave me for destruction" (he meant *instruction*) "to take them in peace, if I could not, by war."

Such was the fate of the poor gentle folk who for unknown ages had swung their hammocks to the stems of these Moriches, spinning the skin of the young leaves into twine, and making sago from the pith, and wine

from the sap and fruit, while they warned their children not to touch the nests of the humming-bird, which even till lately swarmed around the lake.

For—so the Indian story ran—once on a time a tribe of Chaymas built their palm-leaf ajoupas upon the very spot where the lake now lies, and lived a merry life. The sea swarmed with shell-fish and turtle, and the land with pine-apples; the springs were haunted by countless flocks of flamingoes and horned screamers, pauxis, and blue ramiers; and, above all, by humming-birds. But the foolish Chaymas were blind to the mystery and the beauty of the humming-birds, and would not understand how they were no other than the souls of dead Indians, translated into living jewels; so they killed them in wantonness, and angered “the Good Spirit.” And one morning, when the Guaraons came by, the Chayma village had sunk deep into the earth, and in its place had risen this lake of pitch.

So runs the tale, told some forty years since, almost word for word, to M. Joseph, author of a clever little history of Trinidad, by an old half-caste Indian, Señor Trinidadá by name, who was said then to be nine one hundred years of age.

Surely the people among whom such a myth could spring up were worthy of a nobler fate. Surely there were in them elements of “sweetness and light,” which might have been cultivated to some fine fruit, had there been anything like sweetness and light in their first conquerors—the offscourings not of Spain and Portugal

only, but of Germany, Italy, and, indeed, almost every country in Europe.

There are a few Indians remaining in the Northern mountains, cacao-growing mountaineers, as simple and gentle, as loyal and peaceable, as any in her Majesty's dominions. Dignified, courteous, hospitable according to their little means, they salute the white señor without defiance and without servility; and are delighted if he will sit in their clay and palm ajoupas, and eat oranges and Malacca apples from their own trees, on their own freehold land.

They preserve, too—at least the full-blooded Indians—the old Guaraon arts of weaving baskets and other utensils, pretty enough, from the strips of the calathea leaves. From them the Negro, who will not or cannot equal them in handicraft, buys the pack in which wares are carried on the back, and the curious strainer in which the cassava is deprived of its poisonous juice. So cleverly are the fibres twisted, that when the strainer is hung up, with a stone weight at the lower end, the diameter of the strainer decreases as its length increases; and the juice is squeezed out through the pores to drip into a calabash, and, nowadays, to be thrown carefully away, lest children or goats should drink it. Of old, it was kept with care, boiled down to a gum, and used to poison arrows, as it is still used, I believe, on the Orinoco.

These are all that are left of the once beautiful, deft, and happy Indians of Trinidad: unless, indeed, some of

them, warned by the fate of the Indians of San Joseph and the Northern Mountains, fled from such tyrants as Juan Bono and Berreo across the Gulf of Paria, and rejoining their kinsmen on the mainland, gladly forgot the sight of that cross which was not to save, but to destroy them.

For once a year, till of late—I know not whether the sight may be seen still—a strange phantom used to appear at San Fernando, twenty miles to the north. Canoes of Indians came mysteriously across the Gulf of Paria from the vast swamps of the Orinoco; and the naked folk landed, and went up through the town, after the Naparima ladies (so runs the tale) had sent down to the shore garments for the women, which were worn only through the streets, and laid by again as soon as they entered the forest. Silent, modest, dejected, the gentle savages used to vanish into the woods, by paths made by their kinsfolk centuries ago—paths which run, wherever possible, along the vantage-ground of the top-most chines and ridges of the hills. The smoke of their fires rose out of lonely glens as they collected the fruit of trees known only to themselves. In a few weeks their wild harvest was over, and they came back through San Fernando; made, almost in silence, their little purchases in the town; and paddled away across the gulf towards the unknown wildernesses from whence they came.

But there—as if sent to drive away sad thoughts and vain regrets—before your feet lies a jest of nature's

almost as absurd as a "four-eyed fish," or "crawling-crab."

A rough stick, of the size of your little finger, lies on the pitch. Watch it a moment, and you see that it is crawling; that it is a huge caddis, like those in the ponds at home, though of a very different family. They are the larvæ of *Phryganeas*—this of a true moth. The male of this moth will come out as a moth should and fly about on four handsome wings. The



MORICHE PALMS.

female will never develop her wings, but remain to her life's end a crawling grub, like the female of our own vapourer moth, and that of our English glow-worm. But more, she will never (at least, in some species of this family) leave her silk and bark case, but live and die an anchoritess in narrow cell, leaving behind her more than one puzzle for physiologists.

You take up the case. It is fitted close to the body of the caterpillar, save at the mouth, where it hangs loose in two ragged silken curtains. You look at the creature, and it looks at you, with its last two or three joints and its head thrust out of its house. Suddenly, disgusted at your importunity, it lays hold of its curtains with two hands, right and left, like a human being, folds them modestly over its head, holds them tight together, and so retires to bed, amid the inextinguishable laughter (if they have any laugh in them) of all beholders.

Look, now, how these noble Moriche palms delight in wet. The soil in which they grow is half pitch pavement, half loose brown earth, and over both, shallow pools of water, which will become much deeper in the wet season.

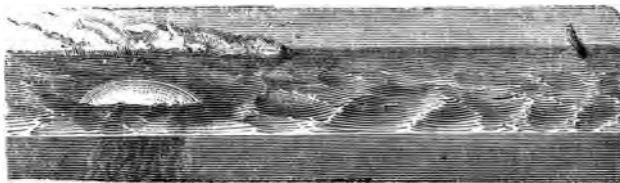
In the season of inundations these clumps of Mauritia, with their leaves in the form of a fan, have the appearance of a forest rising from the bosom of the waters.

The navigator, in proceeding along the channels of the delta of the Orinoco at night, sees with surprise the summit of the palm-trees illumined by large fires. These are the habitations of the Guaraons, which are suspended from the trunks of the trees.

These tribes hang up mats in the air, which they fill with earth, and kindle on a layer of moist clay the fire necessary for their household wants. They have owed their liberty and their political independence for ages to the quaking and swampy soil, which they pass over in the time of drought, and on which they alone know how to walk in security to their solitude in the delta of the Orinoco, to their abode on the trees.

The *Mauritia* palm-tree, the *tree of life* of the missionaries, not only affords the Guaraons a safe dwelling during the risings of the Orinoco, but its shelly fruit, its farinaceous pith, its juice, abounding in saccharine matter, and the fibres of its petioles, furnish them with food, wine, and thread proper for making cords and weaving hammocks. It is curious to observe in the lowest degree of human civilisation the existence of a whole tribe depending on one single species of palm-tree, similar to those insects which feed on one and the same flower, or on one and the same part of a plant.

MONOS.



MONOS.

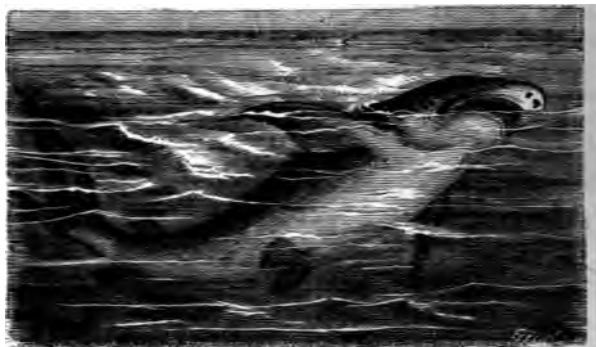
CHAPTER I.

THE ISLAND.

WE rowed on, past the Boca de Monos, by which we had entered the gulf at first, and looked out eagerly enough for sharks, which are said to swarm at Chaguaramas. But no warning fin appeared above the ripple; only, more than once, close to the stern of the boat, a heavy fish broke water with a sharp splash and swirl, which was said to be a barracouda, following us up in mere bold curiosity, but perfectly ready to have attacked any one who fell overboard.

These barracoudas — Sphyrænas as the learned, or “pike” as the sailors, call them, though they are no kin to our pike at home—are, when large, nearly as dangerous as a shark. In some parts of the West Indies, folk dare not bathe for fear of them; for they lie close in

shore, amid the heaviest surf, and woe to any living thing which they come across. Moreover, they have this somewhat mean advantage over you, that while, if they eat you, you will agree with them perfectly, you cannot eat them (at least at certain or uncertain seasons of the year) without their disagreeing with you ; without sickness, trembling, pains in all joints, falling off of nails and hair for years to come, and possibly death. So that



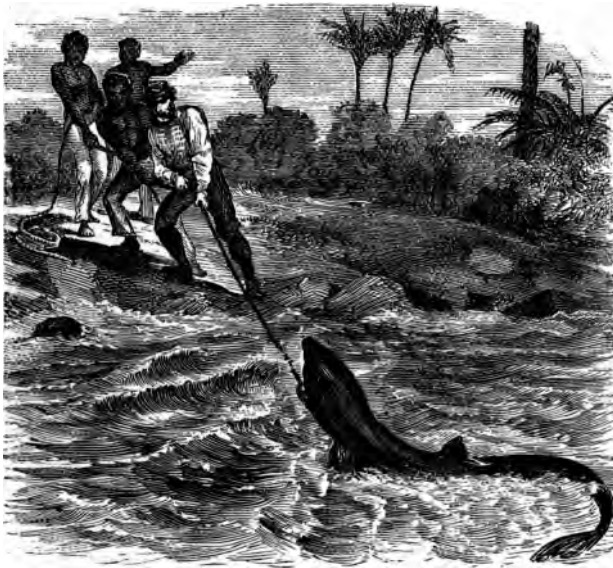
SHARK.

the barracouda lives, at least among prudent people, the same careless life as poor Festus Bailey's "great black crow"—

"Who all his life sings Ho! ho! ho!
For no one will eat him he well doth know."

But though safe from the attacks of the cook, neither

barracouda nor shark enjoys a safe life. Nothing affords to the natives such wild delight as the catching and torturing of these monsters. Neither serpent nor crocodile is destroyed with half the savage satisfaction with which, here and everywhere, both barbarian and



LANDING A SHARK.

Christian men take the life of a shark. Why is this? The answer will suggest itself, and may not be without moral to some of our readers.

These islands of the Bocas, three in number, are some

two miles long each, and some eight hundred to one thousand feet in height; at least, so say the surveyors. To the eye, as is usual in the Tropics, they look much lower.

One is inclined here to estimate hills at half, or less than half, their actual height; and that from causes simple enough. Not only the intense clearness of the atmosphere makes the summits appear much nearer than in England; but the trees on the summit increase the deception. The mind, from home association, supposes them to be of the same height as average English trees on a hill-top—say fifty feet; and estimates, rapidly and unconsciously, the height of the mountain by that standard. The trees are actually nearer a hundred and fifty than fifty feet high; and the mountain is two or three times as big as it looks.

We rowed that day, a curved shingle beach, some fifty yards across, shut in right and left by steep rocks, wooded down almost to the sea, and worn into black caves and crannies, festooned with the night-blowing cereus, which crawls about with hairy green legs, like a tangle of giant spiders.

Among it, in the cracks, upright cactuses, like candelabra twenty and thirty feet high, thrust themselves aloft into the brushwood. An anthurium clung parasitic on roots and stems, sending downward long air-roots, and upward brown rat-tails of flower (it is a cousin of our arums) and broad leaves, four feet by two, which wither into whity-brown paper, and as such are used, being

tough and fibrous, to wrap round the rowlocks of the oars. Wild pines, too, spread their long prickly leaves among the bush of "rastrajo," or second growth after the primæval forest has been cleared, which dips suddenly right and left to the beach.

This beach, and the strip of flat ground behind it, hold a three-roomed cottage—of course on stilts; a shed which serves as a kitchen; a third ruined building, which is tenanted mostly by lizards and creeping flowers; some twenty or thirty cocoa-nut trees; and on the very edge of the sea an almond-tree, its roots built up to seaward with great stones, its trunk hung with fishing lines, and around it, scattered on the shingle, strange shells, bits of coral, cocoa-nuts, and their fragments, almonds from the tree, the round fruit of the *Mauritia* palm, which has probably floated across the gulf from the forests of the Orinoco or the Caroni, and the long seeds of the mangrove, in shape like a roach-fisher's float, and already germinating, their leaves showing at the upper end, a tiny root at the lower. In that shingle they will not take root; but they are quite ready to go to sea again next tide, and wander on for weeks, and for hundreds of miles, till they run ashore at last on a congenial bed of mud, throw out spider legs right and left, and hide the foul mire with their gay green leaves.

The almond-tree, you must understand, with its flat stages of large smooth leaves, and oily eatable seeds in an almond-like husk, is not an almond at all, or any kin thereto. It has been named, as so many West Indian

plants have, after some known plant to which it bore a likeness; and was introduced hither, and indeed to all shores from Cuba to Guiana, from the East Indies, through Arabia and tropical Africa, having begun its



CREOLE.

westward journey, probably, in the pocket of some Portuguese follower of Vasco de Gama.

We beach the boat close to the almond-tree, and are welcomed on shore by the lord of the isle, a gallant red-bearded Scotsman, with a head and a heart, and a

handsome Creole wife, and handsome brownish children, with no more clothes on than they can help. An old sailor, and much-wandering Ulysses, he is now coast-guard-man, water-bailiff, warden, practical policeman, and, indeed, practical viceroy of the island; and an easy life of it he must have, save when, in spring, he has now and then to prevent the Negroes, at the whaling station a couple of miles off, from killing each other or him.

But what a paradise! The sea gives him fish enough for his family and a brawny brown servant. His cocoanut trees yield him a little revenue; he has poultry, kids, and goats' milk more than he needs; his patch of provision-ground in the place gives him corn, sweet potatoes, and yams, tania, cassada, and fruit, too, all the year round. He needs nothing, owes nothing, fears nothing. News and politics are to him like the distant murmur of the surf at the back of the island—a noise which is nought to him. His Bible, his almanac, and three or four old books on a shelf, are his whole library. He has all that *man* needs, and more than man deserves, and is far too wise to wish to better himself.

We rowed away again, full of longing, but not of hope, of reaching one or other of the Guacharo caves. Keeping along under the lee of the island, we crossed the "Umbrella Mouth," between it and Huevos, or Egg Island. As we crossed the tumbling swell which came in from the outer sea, the columns of white spray which rose right and left against the two door-posts of that

mighty gateway augured ill for our chances of entering the cave. But on we went, with a warning not to be upset if we could avoid it, in the shape of a shark's back



ALOE.

fin above the oily swell; and under Huevos, and round into a lonely cove, with high crumbling cliffs bedecked

with cactus and aloes in flower, their tall spikes of green flowers standing out against the sky, twenty or thirty feet in height.



CACTUS.

As the sun sank in the evening, we sat upon the eastern rocks, and gazed away into the pale, sad, bound-

less west; while Venus hung high, not a point, as in England, but a broad disc of light, throwing a long gleam over the sea. Fish skipped over the clear calm water; and above pelicans—the younger brown, the older grey—wheeled round and round in lordly flight, paused, gave a sudden half-turn, then fell into the water with wide-spread wings, and, after a splash, rose with another skip-jack in their pouches.

As it grew dark, black things came trooping over the sea by twos and threes, then twenty at a time, all past us toward a cave near by. Birds we fancied them at first, of the colour and size of starlings; but they proved to be bats, and bats, too, which have the reputation of catching fish. So goes the tale, believed by some, who see them continually, and have a keen eye for nature, and who say that the bat sweeps the fish up off the top of the water with the scoop-like membrane of his hind-legs and tail. I do not expect you to believe this, because I do not believe it myself. Not that it is impossible—what is?—but simply because we saw, or seemed to see, how the myth arose. A bat now and then stooped suddenly to the water some three feet, and picked up something, just where the little skip-jacks were rising; and we (who had not heard the fish-eating story) took for granted that bat and fish were after the same game, viz., insects which had been blown into the water.

So we sat watching the little dark things flit by, like the gibbering ghosts of the suitors in the Odyssey, into

the darkness of the cave, till it was time to feel our way in-doors, by such light as Venus gave, over the slippery rocks, and then, cautiously enough, past the Manchineel bush, a broken sprig of which would have raised an instant blister on the face or hand.

Our night (as often happens in the Tropics) was not



PELICANS.

altogether undisturbed ; for shortly after I had become unconscious of the chorus of toads and cicadas, my hammock came down by the head. Then I was woke by a sudden bark close outside, exactly like that of a clicketing fox ; but as the dogs did not reply or give chase, I presumed it to be the cry of a bird, possibly

a little owl. Next there rushed down the mountain a storm of wind and rain, which made the coco leaves flap and creak, and rattle against the gable of the house, and set every door and window banging, till they were caught and brought to reason.

And between the howls of the wind I became aware of a strange noise from seaward—a booming, or rather humming, most like that which a locomotive sometimes makes when blowing off steam. It was faint and distant, but deep and strong enough to set one guessing at its cause. The sea beating into caves seemed, at first, the simplest answer. But the water was so still on our side of the island, that I could barely hear the lap of the ripple on the shingle twenty yards off; and the nearest surf was a mile or two away, over a mountain a thousand feet high. So puzzling vainly, I fell asleep.

As we went to bathe we heard again, in perfect calm, the same mysterious booming sound, and were assured by those who ought to have known, that it came from under the water, and was most probably made by none other than the famous musical or drum fish, of which I had heard, and hardly believed, much in past years.

Mr. E. L. Joseph, author of a clever little History of Trinidad, reports that the first time he heard this singular fish was on board a schooner, at anchor off Chaguaramas (about five miles south of Monos).

“Immediately under the vessel I heard a deep and not unpleasant sound, similar to what one might imagine to proceed from a thousand Æolian harps; this ceased, and

deep twanging notes succeeded ; these gradually swelled into an uninterrupted stream of singular sounds, like the booming of a number of Chinese gongs under the water ; to these succeeded notes that had a faint resemblance to a wild chorus of a hundred human voices singing out of tune in deep bass."

"In White's '*Voyage to Cochin China*,'" adds Mr. Joseph, "there is as good a description of this, or a similar submarine concert, as mere words can convey: this the voyager heard in the Eastern seas. He was told the singers were a flat kind of fish ; he, however, did not see them."

"Might not this fish," he asks, "or one resembling it in vocal qualities, have given rise to the fable of the Sirens?"

It might, certainly, if the fact be true. Moreover, the old Spanish Conquistadores had a myth that music was to be heard in this very Gulf of Paria, and that at certain seasons the Nymphs and Tritons assembled therein, and with ravishing strains sang their watery loves. The story of the music has been usually treated as a sailor's fable, and the Sirens and Tritons supposed to be mere stupid manatis, or sea-cows, coming in (as they do still now and then) to browse on mangrove shoots and thistle-grass ; but if the story of the music be true, the myth may have had a double root.

Meanwhile Hardwicke's "*Science Gossip*" gives an extract from a letter of M. O. de Thoron, communicated by him to the Académie des Sciences, which confirms Mr.

Joseph's story. He asserts that in the Bay of Pailon, in Esmeraldos, Ecuador, *i.e.* on the Pacific coast, and also up more than one of the rivers, he has heard a similar sound, attributed by the natives to a fish which they call the "Siren," or "Musico." At first, he says, he thought it was produced by a fly—a hornet of extraordinary size; but afterwards, having advanced a little further, he heard a multitude of different voices, which harmonized together, imitating a church organ to great perfection.

The good people of Trinidad believe that the fish which makes this noise is the trumpet-fish, or *Fistularia*,—a beast strange enough in shape to be credited with strange actions.

I vouch for nothing, save that I heard this strange humming more than once. As for the cause of it, I can only say, as was said of yore, that "I hold it for rashness to disbelieve aught amid such fertility of Nature's wonders."



MONOS.

CHAPTER II.

THE CAVE.

WE made an attempt on the Guacharo cave, which lies in the cliff on the Monos Boca. But, alas! the wind had chopped a little to the northward, a swell was rolling in through the Boca, and when we got within twenty yards of the low-browed arch our crew lay on their oars and held a consultation, of which there could but be one result. They were white gentlemen, and not Negroes, and could trust themselves and each other, and ready (as I know well) to "dare all that doth become a man."

But every now and then a swell rolled in high enough to have cracked our skulls against the top, and out again deep enough to have staved the boat against the rocks. If we went to wrack, the Boca was probably full of sharks,

while the current was setting strong out to sea. And, on the whole, if guacharos are precious, so is life : and like Gyges of old, we “ elected to survive,” and rowed away with wistful eyes, determining to get guacharos—a determination which was never carried out—from one of the limestone caverns of the northern mountains.

And now you may ask reasonably enough what



GUACHARO.

guacharos are, and why five English gentlemen and a canny Scots coastguard-man should think it worth while to imperil their lives to obtain them.

I cannot answer you better than by giving Humboldt's account of the bird and of the Cave of Caripe, on the Spanish main hard by, where he discovered them, or

rather described them to civilised Europe, for the first time :—

The cave of the guacharo is pierced in the vertical profile of a rock. The entrance is towards the south, and forms a vault eighty feet broad and seventy-two feet high.

The rock that surmounts the grotto is covered with trees of gigantic height. Some trees with large and shining leaves raise their branches vertically towards the sky ; while others form, as they extend themselves, a thick vault of verdure ; and creeping plants waving in the winds are interwoven in festoons before the opening of the cavern. We distinguished in these festoons flowers of a violet blue, purple, and magnificent orange : some of them had a strange-looking fleshy tube more than four inches long.

But this luxury of vegetation embellishes not only the outside of the vault, it appears even in the vestibule of the grotto. We saw with astonishment plantain-leaved trees, palm-trees, and arborescent arums along the banks of the river, even to those subterranean places. The vegetation continues half excluded from the light of day, and does not disappear till, advancing in the interior, we reach thirty or forty paces from the entrance. . . .

The guacharo quits the cavern at night-fall, especially when the moon shines. It is almost the only frugivorous nocturnal bird (fruit-eating, night flying) that is yet known ; the conformation of its feet sufficiently shows

that it does not hunt like our owls. It feeds on very hard fruits, as the nutcracker and what is known under the name of night-crow. The Indians assured us that it does not pursue insects, as the goat-suckers.

It is difficult to form an idea of the horrible noise occasioned by thousands of these birds in the dark part of the cavern, and which can only be compared to the croaking of our crows, which, striking upon the vaults of the rocks, are repeated by the echo in the depth of the cavern.

The Indians showed us the nests of these birds by fixing torches to the end of a long pole. These nests were fifty or sixty feet high above our heads, in holes in the shape of funnels, with which the roof of the grotto is pierced like a sieve.

The noise increased as we advanced, and the birds were affrighted by the light of the torches of copal. When this noise ceased a few minutes around us, we heard at a distance the plaintive cries of the birds roosting in other ramifications of the cavern. It seemed as if these bands answered each other alternately.

The Indians enter into the cave once a year, near midsummer, armed with poles, by means of which they destroy the greater part of the nests. At this season several thousands of birds are killed; and the old ones, as if to defend their brood, hover over the heads of the Indians, uttering terrible cries. The young, which fall to the ground, are opened on the spot. Their

peritoneum is extremely loaded with fat, and a layer of fat reaches down the abdomen, forming a kind of cushion between the legs of the bird.

This quantity of fat in frugivorous animals not exposed to the light, and exerting very little muscular motion, reminds us of what has been long since observed in the fattening of geese and oxen. It is well known how favourable darkness and repose are to this process. The nocturnal birds of Europe are lean, because, instead of feeding on fruits, like the guacharo, they live on the scanty produce of their prey.

At this period, which is commonly called the 'oil harvest,' the Indians build huts with palm leaves near the entrance, and even in the porch of the cavern. Of these we still saw some remains. There, with a fire of brushwood, they melt in pots of clay the fat of the young birds just killed. . . .

The natives connect mystic ideas with this cave inhabited by nocturnal birds; they believe that the souls of their ancestors sojourn in the deep recesses of the cavern. "Man," say they, "should avoid places which are enlightened neither by the sun nor by the moon." To go and join the guacharos is to rejoin their fathers, is to die. The magicians and the poisoners perform their nocturnal tricks at the entrance of the cavern, to conjure the chief of the evil spirits. . . .

We could not prevail on the Indians to penetrate farther into the cavern. As the vault grew lower, the cries of the guacharos became more shrill. We were

obliged to yield to the pusillanimity of our guides, and trace back our steps.

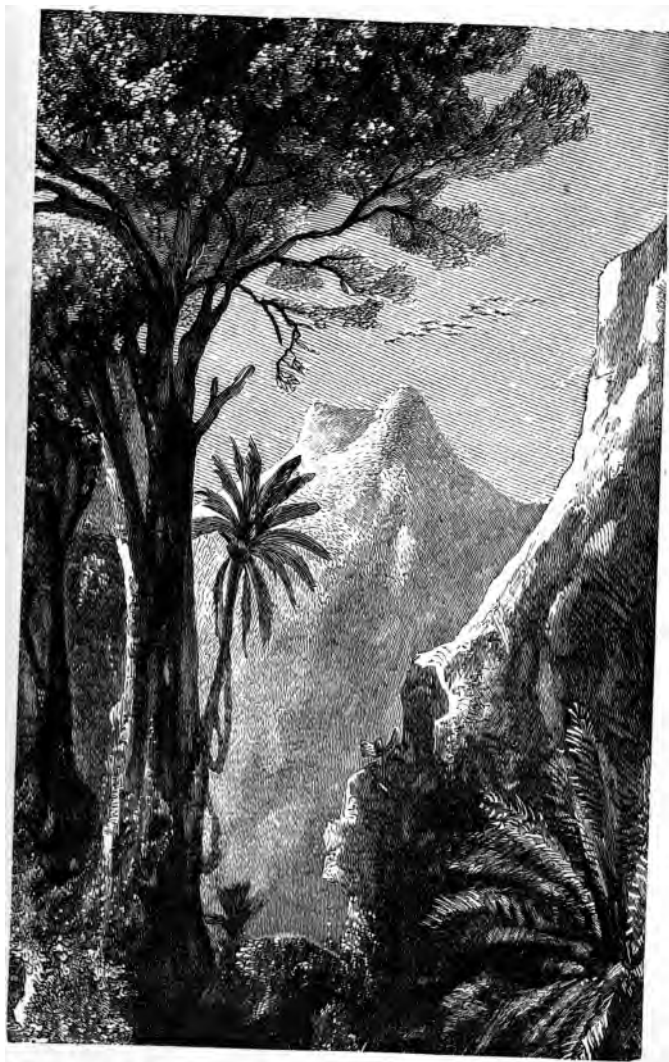
The appearance of the cavern was indeed very uniform. We find that a Bishop of St. Thomas of Guiana had gone farther than ourselves. He had measured nearly two thousand five hundred feet from the mouth to the spot where he stopped, though the cavern reached farther. The bishop had provided himself with great torches of white wax of Castille. We had torches composed only of the bark of trees and native resin, the thick smoke which issued from them hurting the eyes and obstructing the respiration.

We followed the course of the torrent to go out of the cavern. Before our eyes were dazzled by the light of day, we saw without the grotto the water of the river sparkling amid the foliage of the trees that concealed it. It was like a picture placed in the distance, and to which the mouth of the cavern served as a frame.

Having at length reached the entrance, and seated ourselves on the banks of the rivulet, we rested after our fatigues. We were glad to be beyond the hoarse cries of the birds, and to leave a place where darkness does not offer even the charms of silence and tranquillity.

One of our party, who, with his suite, had gone there last year, had by the help of the magnesium light, penetrated further into the cave than Humboldt.

We rowed away, and toward our island paradise. But instead of going straight home, we turned into a deep cove, where was somewhat to be seen, and not to be



BY THE SHORE.

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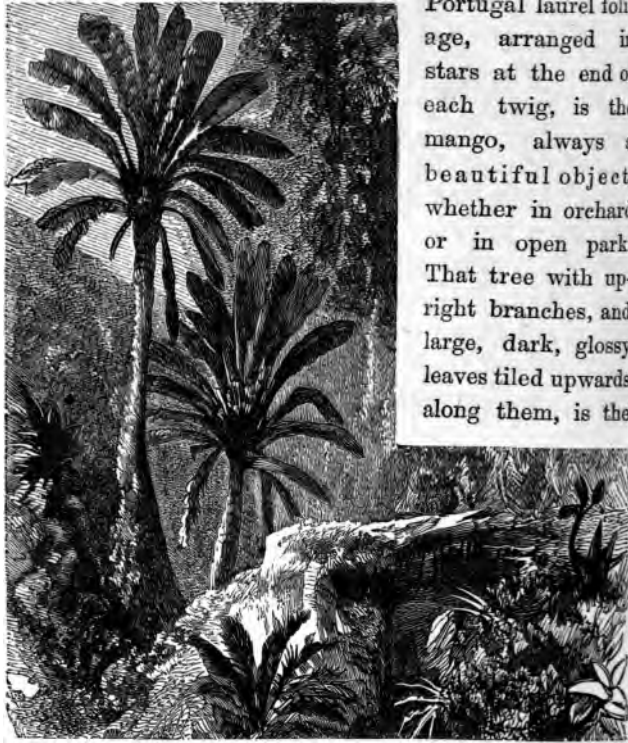
forgotten again. We grated in, over a shallow bottom of pebbles, interspersed with grey lumps of coral pulp, and of Botrylli, azure, crimson, and all the hues of the flower-garden, and landed on the bank of a mangrove swamp.

The hideous beer-coloured mud lies festering in the sun, and cooking poison day and night; while the Mangroves, Avicennias, and graceful white Roseaux (tall canes) kindly do their best to lessen the mischief, by rooting in the slime, and absorbing the poison with their leaves. A white man, sleeping one night on its edge, would be in danger of catching a fever and ague, which would make a weaker man of him for the rest of his life. And yet—so thoroughly fitted for the climate is the Negro—not ten yards from the edge of the mud stood a comfortable Negro-house, with stout healthy folk therein, evidently well to do in the world, to judge from the poultry, and fruit-trees, and provision ground which stretched up the glen.

And now—stop in fancy with us in the Negro's "provision ground." Look around you; and learn something of the look of various trees and plants of which you have heard tell for many a year.

There are orange-trees laden with fruit: who knows not them? and that awkward-boughed tree, with huge green fruit, and deeply-cut leaves a foot or more across—leaves so grand that, as one of our party often suggested, their form ought to be introduced into architectural ornamentation, and take the place of the Greek acanthus,

which they surpass in beauty—that is, of course, a bread-fruit tree. That round-headed tree, with dark rich



Portugal laurel foliage, arranged in stars at the end of each twig, is the mango, always a beautiful object, whether in orchard or in open park. That tree with upright branches, and large, dark, glossy leaves tiled upwards along them, is the

BANANAS AND PLANTAIN.

Mammee Sapota, beautiful likewise. And what is that tree like an evergreen peach shedding from the underside of every leaf a golden light—call it not shade? Star-

apple ; and that young thing, with leaves like a Spanish chestnut, which some call alligator pear.

This, like a great myrtle, and bright flesh-coloured fruit, is a Malacca apple ; while that with large leaves, grey and rough underneath, flowers as big as your two hands, with greenish petals and a purple eye, followed by fat, scaly yellow apples, is the sweet-sop.

But the truth must be told. Of these West Indian fruits, not one of them is to be compared with an average strawberry, plum, or pear. But how beautiful they are all and each after their kind ! What a joy for a man to stand at his door and simply look at them growing, leafing, blossoming, fruiting, without pause, through the perpetual summer, in his little garden of the Hesperides, where, as in those of the Phæacians of old, "pear grows ripe on pear, and fig on fig," for ever and for ever !

Now look at the vegetables. At the Bananas and Plantains (your eye would not distinguish them) first of all. Them you must judge of from drawings. No words of mine can make you understand the simple grandeur and grace of a form which startles me whenever I look steadily at it. For, however common it is—none commoner here—it is so unlike aught else, so perfect in itself, that, like a palm, it might well have become, in early ages, an object of worship.

We heard the roar of the trade-surf growing louder and louder in front ; and pushing cautiously through the Roseau, found ourselves on a cliff thirty feet high, and on the other side of the island.

On the way back to our island paradise we passed the whaling quay. It was deserted, for the whales had not yet come in, and there was no chance of seeing a night scene which is described as horribly beautiful—the sharks around a whale while flensing is going on, each monster bathed in phosphorescent light, which makes his whole outline, and every fin, even his evil eyes and teeth, visible far under water, as the glittering fiend comes up from below, snaps his lump out of the whale's side, and is shouldered out of the way by his fellows.

MEXICO.

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SOUTHERN TIERRA CALIENTE, MEXICO.

CHAPTER I.

MEXICO CITY TO TOLUCA.

A FEW provisions in the shape of cartridges having been laid in, rifles cleaned, saddles and pack-saddles looked to, and barometers compared, with three servants, at ten o'clock one morning, I left the door of my hotel in Mexico, for the tropical lowlands known as the Southern Tierra Caliente.

Of course my horse insisted upon standing first on his head and then on his tail, much to my own discomfort and the delight of the sundry friends who were waving *adios* to me from the window. I flattered myself on starting that such a ruffianly-looking band had never before been seen in the place.

My own outfit consisted of a grass *sombrero aucho*, the invariable Mexican short jacket, and a pair of goatskin overalls; while the bells on my Texan spurs jingled a merry tune to the horses' quick step. A carbine, revolver, and big knife completed the picture.

The *mozos*, in their yellow leather jackets and trousers, also armed with carbine, pistol, and sword, chattered gaily to their comrades, who were giving them the last robber-story from our proposed route.

Past the barracks and into the Paseo, meeting the late risers coming in from their morning ride; through the Chapultepec Gate, and up the street of Tacubaya, where the train runs past us, to the great disgust of our horses, till we strike the first descent of the long limestone road leading from Mexico to Toluca.

Twelve o'clock, and we stop at the little hamlet, or rather long street of Santa Fé, where we are to pick up an *ex-pronunciado*, my companion and guide.

But let us see what we are leaving.

Mexico, nestling in a corner of its broad valley, half-hidden in trees and shrubberies, lies like a map fifteen hundred feet below us. To the north the eye follows the valley for sixty miles, dotted with lakes and hamlets, till we lose it in the blue distance of the Sierra. To east, across Tezcoco, in whose blue water they are reflected, Popocatepetl and Ixtlacihuatl shut out the view by eight thousand feet of sombre mountain-side, and three thousand feet more of dazzling snow, standing out sharp and clear in the blue sky.

Up and on past El Contadero, the last outpost of the Federal district, which my revolutionary companion thinks prudent to avoid, as the Commandante is still suffering from the effects of a scrimmage three months before, in which my friend had the great misfortune to put a rifle-ball through the said Commandante's leg. The delicate way in which he told me he did not care to meet him rather amused me.

"Don't think," he said, "that I have any ill-feeling towards the man: but he is so unreasonable; I cannot understand his dislike to me after I have submitted to the amnesty."

I told him to meet me a mile on; thinking, as I saw the Commandante limping about giving his orders, that after all it was not so wonderful if he did harbour a little spite against my unlucky friend.

Here my passports are carefully looked over; and, after folks have convinced themselves that I am on a pacific errand, I jog along to where C. meets me, under the first straggling pines.

From here the road changes into short broken zigzags, winding through the deep gulches, trying alike 'to man and horse. Here we pass a train of ten mule waggons, bringing grain into Mexico. The front waggon has its front wheels mired down so deeply that the united efforts of thirty mules are unable to get it out. Just half a mile above we overtake the three diligences "doubling up" their teams over a rough piece.

The reader has no doubt a vision before him of four

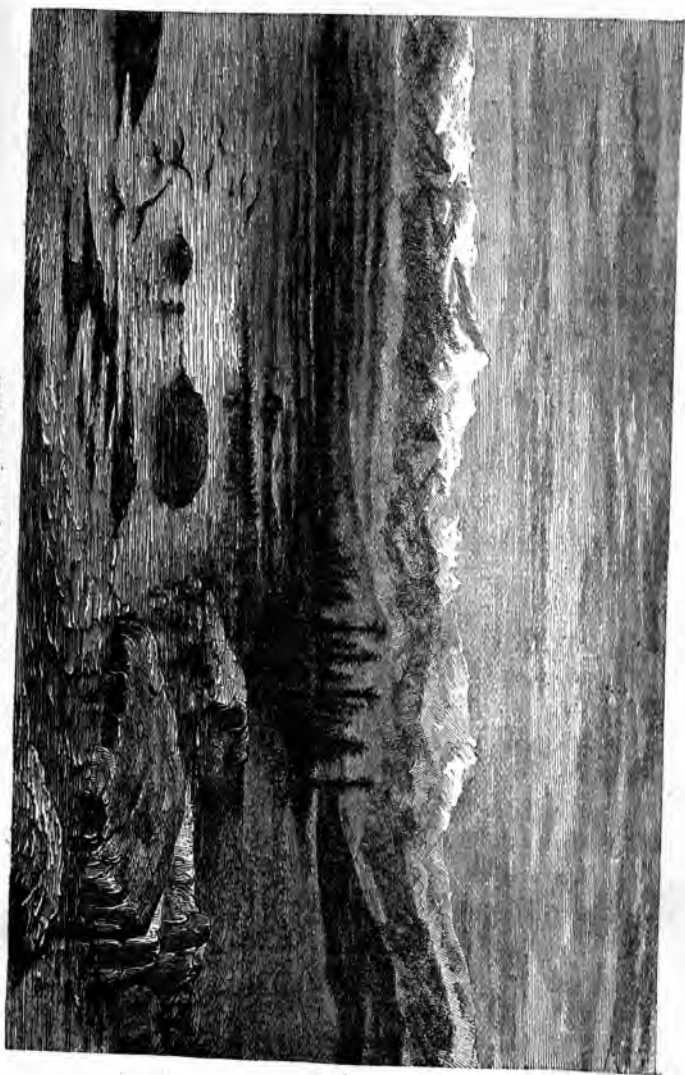
gallant greys racing up a long English turnpike-road, up a gradient of one in a hundred feet ; but let him imagine one coach at the bottom of the hill, whose six lead-mules have been put on to the other team, making fourteen mules in all, which are now toiling with another diligence up a gradient of one in sixteen, over rocks and stones that would not disgrace the side of Snowdon.

Up and onward, till the barometer marks ten thousand four hundred feet above sea-level ; and we see, two thousand feet below us, the broad wheat lands of Toluca blushing under the setting sun.

Here we breathe our horses, tighten up our girths for the descent, and ask the escort, who are waiting for the coach, the "news." There is none ; and after telling them not to take us for robbers when they catch us up with the coach down below, we jog down the road in the last gleam of sunset, which, striking a cloud in the western horizon, is reflected on to the snow peak of the Nevado de Toluca, lighting it up with a crimson glow.

Down and across an open plain, with its scattered ranches ; down again through a vista of fine trees till twilight changes to night, and we are reminded of the diligences we left behind us by the sharp crack of a whip, the heavy lumbering of their wheels, and the clatter of the sabres of the cavalry who escort it.

We turn aside, and they rattle past us, their eight mules doing their twelve miles an hour down a hill over which nobody but Mexican drivers would dare to do



AMONG THE HIGHLANDS OF MEXICO.

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more than four ; while we laugh at the "insides," who, taking us for robbers, hide their pistols in their hand-bags, and call on the escort, and *la santissima Virgen*, to protect them—though both would have proved useless if we had really been what they thought us.

We canter along with the escort for the next mile, till we reach the top of the descent into the Toluca valley ; and jog slowly down into the little town, or rather street, of Lerma, the city of the Lake.

After a *petit verre* with some friends whom we met opposite the little tavern, we settle ourselves down in the saddle for a twelve-mile trot across the level plain, through the darkness. The servants, who up till now have been riding in open order, close up with us ; and a general conversation ensues on the topic ever dear to Mexicans, namely, robbers ; and really a fitter place than the long straight road we were now travelling, with its deep dykes on each side, and a cross-road cutting in at intervals, could scarce be imagined.

Suddenly C. bends low over his saddle-bow, and I see his hand busily slipping the carbine slung along his saddle, while the servants slip theirs out of their cases. I slip my pistol out of the holster, and peer through the darkness ahead, at five or six forms which appear to be horsemen coming towards us. Just then we catch the clink of a sabre, and I hear a thankful sigh behind me from one of the boys, which finds an echo in my own breast of *Escolta*, the escort.

It was amusing to watch their movements when they

caught sight of us, which was not till they were within about twenty yards. The two leaders pulled up short, to let the rest get up. Out rattled their carbines, while the two last half wheel their horses, in order to run in case we should prove awkward customers.

"Quien vive," challenges the sergeant.

"Mejico," I reply.

"De quel regimento?"

"Americano."

"Passen," in a sort of voice that showed his uncertainty still as to who we were.

The ambiguity of this challenge is patent, as any robber could call himself *Paisano* or *Americano*, and the escort would pass him without further inquiry.

This was the only excitement that beguiled our road; and about eight p.m. we were clanking up the streets of Toluca to the hotel, where the fatigues of forty-eight miles in nine hours were soon forgotten in a warm bath, a good supper, and bed.

Next morning early, I did my business with the Governor and the Gefe Politico (chief of the police), who objected so strongly to my revolutionary friend, that I thought it best to send him back, and continue my route alone. That day I made a short and broken journey, to the southernmost and highest point of the Toluca Valley, and indeed of the Central Mexican plateau:

Toluca is eight thousand six hundred feet above the sea; the upper portion, known as the Toluca Valley, comprising an extent of some fifty miles by thirty, is all

under cultivation, and is by far the most thickly populated part of Mexico.

Here the land does not belong, as is generally the case, to private individuals. It is owned by Indian *pueblos*, or corporations, each family having its little plot of land, and working by co-operation under the direction of the *Juez*, or judge. A large number of these Indians do not speak Spanish; and those who do, do so very imperfectly. From what I know of them, they belong, I fancy, to one of the older Mexican races before the Toltec or Aztec came in.

Socially, they are a quiet, well-conducted people, working in the summer on their farms, and in the winter at small industries, one of the principal of which, at the upper end of the valley, is the weaving of baskets and mats made from the rushes growing in the lagoon of Lerma.

These mats, together with earthenware, pottery, eggs, chickens, and charcoal, they take over to Mexico for sale.

The means of transportation is on their own backs; and an Indian will carry from a hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds thirty miles a day for almost any distance. On this trip, two Indians with empty packs, whom I had as guides some months before, happened to leave the gate of Mexico at the same time as I did, and kept up with me to within about two miles of Toluca (forty-six miles), where they turned off to their own little pueblo without the slightest signs of fatigue.

But now we are on the summit of the Divide; and before us the Tierra Caliente is losing itself in the far distance in a blue haze. Down through a deep cañon,

past little Indian villages and a couple of flour mills, and *aguardiente* distilleries, we fast leave behind us the cold zone, and I hail with delight the last scrub oak at about seven thousand feet above sea-level, and see a thousand



A RIVER FALL IN BARRANCA.

feet below me the luxuriant leaves of banana peeping through the dark green of the orange-trees in the Plaza of Tenancingo. I wander down to the river with an acquaintance. From the town it seems just across a level plain shut in by two ranges of mountains, which

converge about twenty miles below; and I am congratulating myself on a good railroad line for at least that distance, when, on the outskirts of the town, I suddenly come upon a chasm two hundred feet deep, into which I find the river fall about two hundred yards above the spot we stand on.

The beauty of the scene before me is almost indescribable. Six miles up stream a thin white ribbon over a wall of grey rock marks where the river debouches on to a flat grass plain, through which it meanders sluggishly till it reaches the end of the volcanic strata, where it drops over a perpendicular black wall of trap rock into a circular basin a hundred feet across, which it has eaten out of the soft sandstone that here comes to the surface; and when my companion tells me that this is only the beginning of one of the smallest of the barrancas of the plain, which stretches southward, I become aware of the fact that engineering in the Tierra Caliente is not quite so easy as it looks.

After smoking a cigarette or two, and watching the curtain of spray which hung over the fall, we wander back to the inn, where I find waiting for me a short, thick-set, dark man, who places himself at my disposal, and gives me a letter from the Governor of Toluca, in which he says that "he has much pleasure in introducing to me the bearer, Q., as a man whose thorough knowledge of the Southern country and people would make him doubtless an invaluable guide to my party." Which surmise has been fulfilled to the very letter.



SOUTHERN TIERRA CALIENTE, MEXICO.

CHAPTER II.

TOLUCA TO CACAHUAMILPA CAVE.

ACCOMPANIED by a goodly cavalcade of enthusiastic railroaders, the following morning (the 6th) we cross the bridge above the fall, and keep down the eastern bank of the stream, which seems to be considered the best. I find that my friend was not mistaken in his description of the plain. The river channel, or, as I will call it and its like for the future, "barranca," de San Geronimo, deepens two hundred feet in the next three miles, and the fall of the plain itself is very considerable.

Our friends proposed to accompany us to a little pueblo called Sumpahuacan, distant fifteen miles, and lying, at the extreme south-eastern edge of the plain, in a sort of cove. This we reach about mid-day, after passing one

desperately-deep barranca called San Pedro, which skirts the range on the eastern side of the plain.

As we canter up the further slope, we see a considerable commotion astir in the pueblo; and some of our party draw back, fearing a disturbance of some kind or another. I, however, innocently cantered on with Q. into the little Plaza, where we were suddenly confronted by about thirty well-armed Indians, who halt us sharply, and in no civil way ask what the dickens we all want.

Before I have time to reply, however, they recognise Q.; and warm greetings take the place of a warmer but less pleasant welcome which might have ensued had I been accompanied by any one else. When I look back at our well-armed little troop, I can hardly blame their mistaking our errand.

The Indians, too, have a hearty welcome for railroad interests, which they show by preparing a sumptuous repast under the grand old ash-tree in the Plaza; and after dinner, when our friends leave us, provide us with a good escort and sure guides for the next fifteen miles.

With many regrets we say good-bye to the Indians, and part with our friends on the further side of the barranca, which we have to re-cross; and I must say I feel rather queer as I see them canter off across the plain.

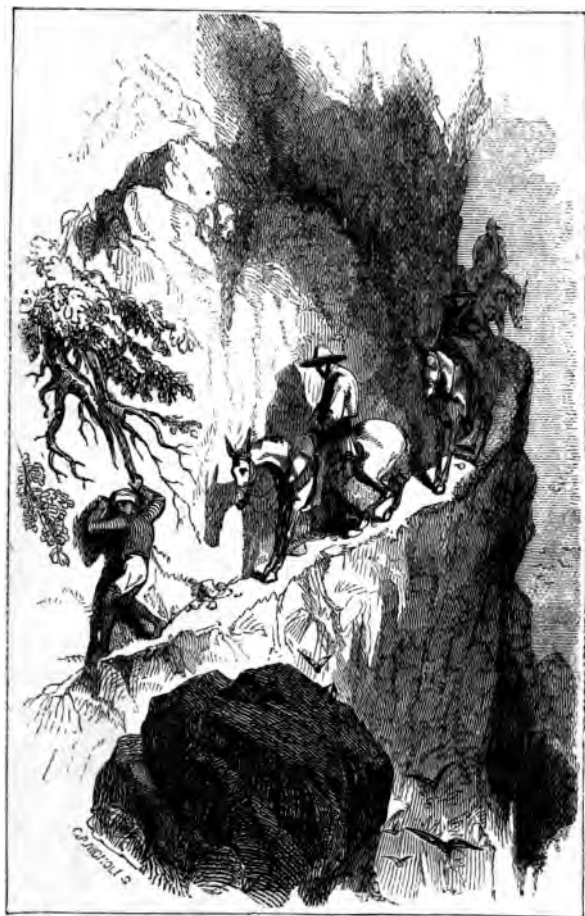
My position is this: Myself and three servants, whom I feel I could depend on utterly, in a country new to all of us, inhabited by Indians who seem entirely at the beck and call of Q. Can I trust him? I was a good prize, I

knew ; which endangered still more my position. " Well, I'll try him at all events ! " and giving a cigarette to each of our Indian escort, I pave the way to a long conversation about the troubles of the last revolution, as we make our way towards the junction of the barrancas de San Pedro and San Geronimo.

About half a mile from the junction, the trail we have been following strikes the edge of the San Pedro barranca again, which has now deepened into a chasm five hundred feet deep, dropping sheer down on our side, and bounded on the opposite side by the Range, which arises some four thousand feet above us.

An Indian trail three feet wide, with a perpendicular wall below, and where one false step would send one five hundred feet on to the jagged rocks of the stream-bed, is not an inviting field for soliloquy ; but I could not help feeling awestruck at the almost inconceivable power which had, geologically speaking, in a few years hewn this chasm out of solid sandstone rock.

The first glance at the trail decides me that I would sooner trust my own legs than the horse's ; and down I get, utterly regardless of the Indio's assurance that there was no fear yet, and relinquish my horse into the hands of one of them. My mozos do the same ; but Q. says that his old grey went down it the last time at a hand-gallop, after an unpleasant encounter with the Government troops on the plain above. So giving him the rein, he lets the old horse pick his way down the zigzag path, over loose boulders, a sheet of sandstone worn smooth



IN THE SAN PEDRO BARRANCA.



by the barefooted Indios, or—what is more dangerous than either—a rut worn through the sandstone a foot deep and a foot broad, through which a horse has not room to pass one foot before the other, unless he lifts them clean out of it.

Down we go, through shrubs, clinging here and there to the face of the cliff, till the sound of the water below us, scarcely noticed above, deepens into a loud roar, and we find ourselves at the actual junction of the two barrancas, five hundred and fifty feet by my barometer below the plain.

Here the trail crosses the eastern barranca, which, owing to the previous night's rain, is in flood, and up to our horses' stomachs. We pass, however, in safety, with the exception of an Indio who chooses a line for himself, and in jumping from one rock to another in mid-stream, slips, and if he had not been brought up by hitting one of the mozo's horses, would most probably have had his brains dashed out in the rapids below. But he joins in a good laugh at his own expense on the further bank, when I give him two dollars to get some more powder, as his own had been thoroughly soaked.

The trail now keeps low along the edge of the river. On our left hand the range rises in a perpendicular crag some three thousand feet high, from whose top a man might drop a stone amongst us. In all my mountaineering, which is not a little, I have never seen such a sheer wall.


Keeping down the bank of the river, or rather a long

series of rapids, we came in a couple of miles to the junction of the barranca which we had been following with another coming in from the west; and on looking at the troubled hundred yards of water between us and the further bank, I feel my heart sink when Q. tells me that this is the only ford. But in spite of his advice to go back to Sumpahuacan, and cross the range to the east, I determined to get to the plain on the further side if possible.

The mozos make their preparations accordingly. They unpack the old horse, and repack very carefully. Fortunately, as will be seen hereafter, my body-servant is sharp enough to take my papers and maps out of the pack and strap them round his own shoulders, while we girth up our horses; and I put my barometer and watch into the crown of my hat for fear of casualties.

When we are all ready an Indio dashes in, and just manages to reach the point between the junction of the two streams. He says we can make it; and in another ten seconds Q.'s old grey is in the middle of it. Suddenly he makes a wild plunge forward, or rather under, which brings forth a gulp from his rider of mingled fear and cold water; but, thank goodness, the old grey has only hit a big rock, and scrambles out on the sandy neck, dripping, but none the worse, with the exception of Q.'s rifle, which, as he had forgot to take it out of the holster, went right under water.

This served as a warning to me and the mozos to take ours in our hands, and I make my essay with a



vengeance, as my horse, after refusing to go in for a minute or two, makes a sudden dive into the water, nearly unshipping me. By dint of administering a gentle dose of the butt of my rifle under his ear, I force him up-stream, so as to avoid Q.'s dangerous rock, and land safely on the little peninsula. The mozos pass, one of them driving the old pack-horse in front of him, in safety.

Thinking it needless to make our escort wet themselves more than is necessary, I feed them, and said good-bye on the bank that we left, from which they have been intently watching our passage, and are now shouting advice to us as to the best mode of crossing the next stream, into which our guide rushes and comes out fifty yards down-stream, after rolling over two or three times, with the pleasant news that it was half a yard deeper than the first one.

In goes Q., and about mid-stream the old horse is swimming, but gets out with a struggle. I follow safely, as does the first mozo: but judge of my horror on seeing the old pack-horse, who comes next in order, turn deliberately nearly in mid-stream! For a moment he keeps his feet, and then is swept down the rapid.

Fortunately the stream sets on to the bank on which Q. and I stand, and about fifty yards below the gallant grey straddles a rock sideways that was sticking up. No man knows how he kept his head above water for the thirty seconds which it took the other two mozos to get across and uncoil their lassos.

Entering the stream cautiously, one throws a lasso over the old horse's head, while the other makes two or three shots at one of his hind-legs sticking out of the water, which he finally catches. Putting their horses up-stream, they pull him from his rocky resting-place ; but then, oh horror ! his full weight being exposed to the force of the stream, the strain is so heavy on the lassos that the horses cannot find sufficient foothold on the rocky bottom. Down goes the outside horse ; and he and his rider scramble to shore as best they can, while the other one slips his lasso, preferring to lose it than to run the chance of losing his own or his horse's life. But some horses were born to be hanged, and not drowned.

The old grey, after turning over three or four times, lands on a sandy promontory that juts out forty or fifty yards below ; with, strange to say, both lassos on him. There he sits on his tail in the water, with his fore-feet out in front of him, staring round with the most comically bewildered look that can be imagined. And it is some time before we can induce him to get up and come on to the bank.

Here he is unpacked, and receives as hearty a benediction as men who find their clothes wetted, bread soaked, and whisky bottles broken, can be expected to give. Happily, I carry a pocket flask, which we now divide among the party ; the guide and the mozo who has got ducked coming in for the lion's share.

Here first I become aware that twilight deepens on us ; and by the time we reach the top of the barranca, seven

hundred and fifty feet above the stream bed, along a twin path to the one we came down, it is almost dark.

Ten miles to go, and a mighty poor chance of supper ; which we prove thoroughly two hours afterwards,



ENTRANCE TO SUBTERRANEAN RIVER.

when we find at the little ranche that the owner has been taken off the previous week by the Government troops, on suspicion of having been connected with the stealing of a horse, and that his wife and family have been

so sorely straitened since for the means of subsistence. However, maize cakes, cheese, junket, and fresh milk are delicious when flavoured by that most excellent sauce of hunger.

After scattering some maize stalks, the only fodder we could get for the poor horses, who were thoroughly tired out by one of the longest and hardest day's work they had ever done, I roll myself in my cloak on the grass, and remember nothing till the sun wakes me next morning.

With a true Englishman's grunt, I cast off my blankets, and find the horses are greedily despatching their morning meal of maize stalk.

After a hearty breakfast, the counterpart of last night's supper, we start along the plain, which here is a perfectly level expanse of grass, about two miles wide, bounded on the east by the barranca we crossed last night, and on the other side by a still larger one coming in from the north-west. Beyond the latter, a long range looms up, in which is the very valuable mining region of Tasco, from which the range takes its name.

We follow the plain down for the next ten miles, where it is shut in by two mountains, under which, to my intense surprise, I find the two barrancas disappear.

After an examination, I find that both of these barrancas have outlets, one to the right, and the other to the left of the mountains; but of very ancient date.

The left-hand barranca enters the mountain-side about one thousand feet below the level of the plain, about

eight hundred feet below its old channel, which here strikes almost due north. As far as I could judge, though I could not get to it, the entrance to the tunnel is three hundred feet high by two hundred broad. The western barranca, I should fancy, was fifteen hundred feet below the level of the plain, but its own old channel is only about two hundred.



SOUTHERN TIERRA CALIENTE, MEXICO.



CHAPTER III.

AT CACAHUAMILPA CAVE, AND ON THE ROAD BEYOND.

IT is not very difficult to give the reason for this curious natural phenomenon, described at the close of the last chapter.

Countless ages ago, these two rivers, or barrancas, ran over the bed of trap which caps the plain. In an unlucky day for engineering they wore it through, and began eating their way through the soft sandstone below it. For centuries they must have kept to their original channels on either side of the mountain, but at last the undercurrent of water began eating out an escape under the mountain, which escape it finally made about three miles below the entrance; with one noticeable fact, that instead of following more or less the direction of their old channels,

the two streams converge under the mountain, and come out within fifty yards of each other on the further side.

After-explorations showed me that even the present mouth of the eastern barranca has been changed, for about a hundred yards from it, to the eastward, is an enormous cavern, now known as the cave of Cacahuamilpa, which has been traced back into the mountain for some two miles or more, but never, I think, to the very end.

Of this cave Mr. Brantz Mayer says:—

“I was one of the last to leave the entrance of the cave, which hangs in a huge arch of sixty feet span, fringed with a curtain of vines and tropical plants. Our party preceded me for some distance along the road that descends rapidly for the first hundred yards. Each one of the guides, Indians, and travellers carried a light. . . I lit my torch and followed.

“The first hundred yards brings you to the bottom of the cavern ; and, if not warned in time, you are likely to plunge at this season of the year (September) up to your knees in water.

“You cross a small lake, and immediately before you, under the vast Gothic vault of the cave, rises a lofty stalagmite pillar, with a fringe falling from the top of it, which seems formed of the brightest foam congealed in a moment. A mimic pulpit rises from the wall, covered with elaborate tracery, and hard by an altar is spread with the fairest napkins, while above it depends a crystal curtain hanging in easy folds, each one of which flashes back the light of your torch as if carved from silver.

"We fastened the end of our twine to a pillar of the altar, and struck out westwardly in the direction of the cavern. After a short distance we turned slightly to the



ROCK-CURTAIN.

south, and passing down a file of rocks that had fallen from the roof, entered the second chamber.

"In the centre of this a huge stalagmite has been formed.



VAULTED CHAMBER.



"It is a lofty mass two hundred feet in circumference, surrounded from top to bottom by rings of fountain basins hanging from its sides, each wider than the other, and carved by the action of water into as beautiful shapes as if cut by the hand of a sculptor. An Indian climbed to the top of it, and firing a blue light illuminated the whole cavern. By the bright unearthly blaze every nook and corner became visible, and the waters and carving of this fountain-tower stood out in wonderful relief.

"We penetrated to the third chamber.

"Here there was no central column, but the effect was produced by the immensity of the vault. It appeared as though you might set the whole of St. Peter's beneath it, with dome and cross (height four hundred and twenty-five feet) . . . An Indian fired a rocket, which exploded as it struck the top of the immense dome, the detonation reverberating from side to side of the vault with the roar of a cannonade. A sheet of stalactite was struck, and it sounded with the clearness of a bell. . . .

"Beyond this chamber was a narrow path between the almost perpendicular rocks, and, as we passed, the guide crept through an entrance near the floor, and holding his torch aloft, displayed a delicious little cave, arched with snowy stalactites. In the middle rose a centre table, covered with its fringed folds, and adorned with goblin knickknacks. . . .

"Two rocks standing beyond this retreat are the portals of another chamber, groined like the rest in

Gothic arches, with the tracery of purest stalactites, while its floor is paved all over with beautiful little globular stalagmites. In a corner fountain we found the skeleton-head of a serpent.

"The path beyond this is nearly blocked up by immense masses that have fallen from the roof. Passing over these, you attain another vaulted cathedral, bright as the rest with flashing stalactites, while its floor is covered knee-deep with water. . . .

"We had now penetrated nearly five thousand feet in the interior of the earth, and the guides said that the chambers were still innumerable beyond. Persons have slept here and gone on the next day, but no termination has yet been discovered. . . .

"From this chamber we returned to the entrance by the clue of our twine."

* * * * *

On leaving the cave and gaining the plain that lies to the south of it, we for the first time become aware that we are in the Tierra Caliente. The sun strikes down fiercely on the lava that crops up through the soil; and a dull steamy brown grey mist rises off the plain, making a little patch of light green sugar-cane in the hacienda of San Gabriel, five miles away, look temptingly cool. But I have wandered from my railroad line in search of "the beauties of nature;" and I have to skirt the mountain due north again to regain it, at the further end of the old northern channel of the barranca.

After skirting the base for about five miles along the

plain, I open on a sort of little oasis in the desert, formed by the river of Malinalco coming in from the north, which, just as it debouches from the mountains, opens out into an oval basin a mile and a half long, covered with sugar-cane, rice, and maize, the latter growing above the level of artificial irrigation; while the broad belt of banana that skirts the river-banks, forms, with its large pendant foliage, a beautiful contrast to the delicate spikes of the cane.

Here and there a ceiba or an ahuahuate rears its giant head a hundred and fifty feet above the stream-bed; and beneath its shade, and half hidden in orange groves, peeps out a little low white house, with a broad verandah; and sometimes a dark spot among the bananas marks a coffee plantation.

Joyously we drop into the valley, forgetting the burning heat in the cool green foliage. Through the maize, and into the cane brake with its little ditches bubbling with the fresh clear water; and then we dive into the semi-darkness of the banana grove; the refreshing roar of the river deepening till we emerge into the bright sunshine on its bank.

It seemed almost a sin to drop from the sublime to the ridiculous at such a time and such a place; but how could one help it?

In mid-stream, with the water boiling and seething round their waists, was a family party—to wit, a stalwart young man, with his aged father on his back, the two reminding me sadly of Sinbad and the Old Man

of the Sea. In front of him was this young man's wife, in the treble agony of driving three donkeys, each packed down with household penates, on the top of which were perched her three round-headed boys, aged respectively five, six, and seven. An Irishman driving two pigs was nothing to it.

Each donkey went separate ways ; the stream, against which she could hardly struggle, threatened every moment to overwhelm one or other of them. In vain she screamed to her husband to throw off the old man, and save his own children from drowning ; but the Old Man of the Sea stuck to him, and absolutely refused to be drowned.

After the first burst of laughter, we saw that matters were really serious, and, charging in on horseback, got down-stream of the donkeys, and picking the children off their backs, drove them to the bank. But judgment fell upon the Old Man of the Sea, as Sinbad, tripping over a big sunken rock, dived head foremost into the water within ten yards of the shore. No sooner did Sinbad find himself in this plight than he cast the old man off, and *saute qui peut* was the cry.

Poor Old Man of the Sea ! We fished him out of a deep eddy thirty yards below, half-drowned, and certainly more than half full of water. It was a beautiful sight to see him sitting on the bank, and hear the flow of anathemas that bubbled out on his son's head between the gulps for breath.

But his daughter-in-law was equal to the occasion ; and as we crossed the stream, and plunged into the

banana swamp on the further side, we could hear the old man's guttural bass and the woman's squeaking falsetto singing a glorious duo to the rattling accompaniment that Sinbad was playing on the donkeys' backs with a thick piece of driftwood, varied every now and then by a shrill scream from one of the children, who had been nearly or perhaps quite swept off one of the donkey's backs by one of the long hanging leaves of a banana.

The trail we had been following soon broadened, and we find ourselves on the remains of an old Indian *Calzada* leading up to the little Plaza of Cucoatlan del Rio, where we decide to pass the night in the house of one of Q.'s revolutionary friends. We ride up to the door, and get a most hearty welcome from him.

The evening passed away in eating, drinking, and chatting, and with one curious incident as we were coming up from the river at sunset, after a refreshing bathe.

We saw, as we got to our host's door, an enormous cloud of what at first appeared to be black birds, coming out of the top of the Courthouse that stood opposite, a noble old pile of Spanish architecture, surrounded by a garden and some magnificent cocoa-nut palms. Q. immediately called my attention to them, and told me that they were an army of bats, which lived in two enormous attics on the top of the house.

As far as I could form an idea, there must have been millions of them, as the next morning early, when they came in the same way, and two or three hours later in

the evening, they took six minutes coming out in a continuous stream of thirty to fifty deep.

Next morning we went up and inspected their domicile, or rather tried to do so, as it was utterly impossible to get near them from the dirt.

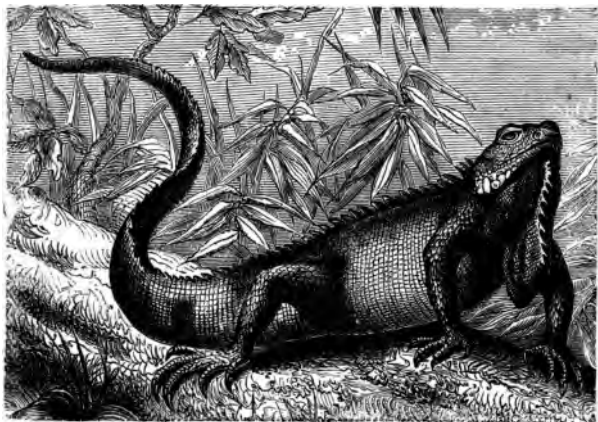
After the bat inspection was over, we followed down the river through a long chain of banana groves, which every now and then opened out into a little *vega*, or meadow of rice or sugar, till we came, in about six hours, to the boundary-wall of the hacienda of San Gabriel, and through the scattered bushes we saw a broad low-lying flat of perhaps four miles square, the cane-lands of San Gabriel and San José.

Our path here followed the outside of the wall, covered with great patches of lianas, honeysuckles, and passion-flowers. The sun was at its full height, and, to our intense delight, we found basking in the heat, on the top, numberless iguanas and lizards.

And now the fun began ; by a common impulse we bent down to the ground from our saddles without getting off, and in another moment such a broadside of stones was hurled at the hapless iguanas, as perhaps never yet had surprised their weak nerves.

The horses grew as excited as we did ; and my old horse, who had evidently been at this work before, would point at one of them like a dog, and swing himself round of his own accord, so that I could get a fair shot with the full swing of my arm ; but I am afraid there was a great deal of good shooting and very bad hitting.

However, we managed to have a pretty lively time, which was increased by one of the mozos hitting the old pack-horse hard under the ear with the biggest stone he could find; and by my saddle turning round with me as I stooped to pick up a stone, dropping me on my head, having carefully chosen the hardest spot along the whole road for my exploit.



IGUANA.

I am ready to depose, on oath, that an old black and red iguana, ten yards on, was laughing at me when I caught sight of him, and, as I pulled out my pistol to have a quiet shot at him, he cocked his head on one side, as much as to say, "The man who falls off his horse can't hit me." Alas for his powers of divination! The

ants' nest, into which he fell, told a different tale as we passed the next morning.

As we entered the little Plaza outside the hacienda of San Gabriel, I became aware of the fact that it was Sunday, as it was thronged with Indios from the neighbouring ranches.

Here I was at the southernmost point of my trip, and the next day I trespassed on the well-known hospitality of the administrator of the hacienda, by resting my horses and lounging.

THE END.

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